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Guest Editorial

The Word and the Machine

TWO themes, which in the past had always been fruitful sources of inspiration to poets, have almost vanished from the poetry written in the last fifty years, namely, the public figure as a hero for panegyric or a villain for satire, and the *polis*, the particular political-economic-religious organism in which any given poet happens to be a cell. Most living English poets probably admire Sir Winston Churchill more than Dryden admired Charles II, but the thought of writing a poem about him does not occur to them; one has no right to suppose that all the poets in Russia who wrote hymns to Stalin had their tongues in their cheeks, yet their efforts were uniformly worthless as poetry. Most poets in the West believe that some sort of democracy is preferable to any sort of totalitarian state and accept certain political obligations, to pay taxes, to vote for the best man or programme, to serve as jurymen, to write letters of protest against this or that act of injustice or vandalism, but I cannot think of a single poet of consequence whose work does not, either directly or by implication, condemn modern civilisation as an irremediable mistake, a bad world which we have to endure because it is there and no one knows how it could be made into a better one, but in which we can only retain our humanity in the degree to which we resist its pressures.

Justified or unjustified, this negative attitude raises some interesting questions about the nature of poetry. For poetry to take an interest in and be capable of dealing with a subject, the latter must possess three qualities: personality, power, and virtue or wickedness. Thus, to be a poetic hero, a man must intend to do something and be able to do it; the consequences of his act may be contrary to his intention, but if they are, it is because he has misused his power, not because he lacked it, so that he must accept responsibility.

As long as he only possessed tools and no machines, man could think of natural forces as personal: Nature, as he encountered her, was more powerful than he, variable from day to day, but rhythmical and consistent in the long run—she might send a drought one year but she would never make Autumn precede Summer. Similarly, without machines, the public relations between men as citizens, producers, and consumers, and their private relations as families and friends were of the same order; the power which one man could exert over another was determined in both cases by his personal magnetism, his personal achievements, and the *numen* attributed to his status as father, king, priest, etc.

But the machine divorced power from person: nature becomes an impersonal slave, but the slave not of this or that person but of man-in-general, the impersonal collective. Poor morale can still lose a war, but no excellence of morale can win one without machines which take no oaths of loyalty. The good or evil a man can do depends not on the intensity of his intention but the power of the machines which carry out his intention for him. If I stab another with a spear, the act of killing is clearly mine; if I drop a bomb on a city, *my* act consists in pressing a button, and it is the bomb which does the killing. Even the personal influence a public figure can exert depends less on his personality than on the printing-presses and loud-speakers he can command.

The position of the poet in a technological civilisation, therefore, is doubly difficult. A natural ease of communication between artist and audience requires that the unity of power

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and person which is the æsthetic subject be publicly manifest, but in such a civilisation they are united only on the private level. In previous times, the way in which the poet worked was essentially the same as that of everybody else—writing a poem and digging a ditch were both done by hand, and the poet and the ditcher were both personally responsible for the result; but today, the poet has become an eccentric figure, not through any intention on his part but simply because the way in which he works, by hand, by himself, has become eccentric.

The "courtly" bard might look down on the "popular" ballad singer, but he recognised him as a brother: today "high-brow" art and the "mass-entertainment" of film, radio, and television are so separated by their methods of production that no comparison is possible—they belong to different worlds.

ANYONE whose social position is eccentric is apt to compensate for his feelings of loneliness by assertions of superiority, but in the case of the modern poet this tendency is aggravated by his feeling that he is one of the lucky few whose work is still personally meaningful and not so and so many hours of meaningless activity spent to acquire the means to live a real life after they are over. Those whom he envies are not the rich or the powerful but the scientists, doctors, machine designers, etc., for whose happiness our age seems designed as earlier ages were designed for great landowners, for these people enjoy the satisfaction both of meaningful work and of an unequivocal social position. When I am in the company of scientists I feel like a curate who has strayed into a drawing-room full of dukes.

If the attitude of poets towards our civilisation is purely negative, this is mainly because they know that poetry can do nothing to solve the problems of a machine culture and the people who might be able to do so seem hardly aware that these problems exist. Let me mention two.

The kitchen refrigerator seems to me an unqualified material good, so that it would be good if every household on earth possessed one. To produce refrigerators at a price which would make this possible, mass-production methods must, I assume, be employed. Here the problem is the spiritual welfare of the workers in the refrigerator factory. While a great deal of research has been done to discover how the worker can economise time and effort, what incentives appeal to him most, what physical and psychological conditions in the plant will keep him contented, almost nothing, so far as I know, has been done to find out for how many hours it is possible for the average person to work in this way before permanent depersonalisation sets in. Such research cannot be done by poets.

The second problem is much more serious and much harder to find an answer to, for it is concerned with the role of the machine, of radios and gramophones, for example, in the production not of material but of spiritual goods, and its effect not only on those who make them but also those who enjoy their use. Is there something in the essential natures of the machine and the Word which makes them incompatible, so that at the slightest contact with the former the Word turns into lifeless words? Is even the mechanical printing press, but for which I should never have been able to read the books which have formed my life, nor, for that matter, be writing this article now, an evil? Sometimes I have an uneasy suspicion that it is.

W. H. Auden

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Woodrow Wyatt

Churchill as Parliamentarian

SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL does not walk into the House. He appears in it suddenly from behind the Speaker's Chair. He does not seem to have legs like other human beings: his face and body look all of a piece, like a fabulous Humpty Dumpty. The moment this miraculous creature is noticed coming into sight, the atmosphere changes tangibly. Visitors, if they are at the back of the Strangers' Gallery, stand up—or, if they are at the side, they thrust their heads over the railings —to make sure of at least one glimpse of it. Members become more alert. Murmurs of "here comes the old man" pass along the benches. The huge, almost baby-like face is carefully examined for signs of entertainment, excitement, or tranquillity to come.

There is no concealment in that face: on its broad, white canvas an emotion is set for a moment, wiped off, then instantly replaced by another, quite different one. There is the scowl, directed at everybody. There is the baleful, nearly malevolent look concentrated on an individual member to whom Sir Winston has taken a temporary dislike. There is the child's sulk when, perhaps, he thinks the Speaker, or the Opposition, has been unfair to him. There is the twinkling eye—a signal to the House that a Churchillian joke appreciated by its author is on the way. There is the large, full-sized smile, which seems to divide Humpty Dumpty somewhere at the middle, and which appears when he thinks he has made an opponent uncomfortable. There is the air of mock penitence. There is the convulsed, or laughing, face when the world, the Opposition, or a Parliamentary situation strikes him as grotesquely wonderful. There are the looks magnanimous, contemptuous, indifferent, very bored, sombre, despairing, arrogant. . . . All are emphatic, unmistakable, rich, and firmly lined. Only one look is missing: the look apologetic.

He may not utter a word, yet as long as he sits on the bench, the great head moving round, the face animated or so lifeless that it has the quality of a bust worn by time, the charged temper of the atmosphere is sustained. Every gesture, every move of hand to ear, has significance. When he gets up to go, something of the vitality of the House goes with him. It settles down to a quieter jog, like a reception after the champagne is finished.

THIS Humpty Dumpty has a magic which touches all, even those who, sincerely or affectedly, declare that they are indifferent to him, or detest him. From his opponents he evokes violent hatred, dislike, derision, friendliness, and love. From his supporters he calls out the two last emotions and adds to them bewilderment, frustration, misery, and enthusiasm. Like the shape in which it lives, the personality is round and full, embracing everything a human being can encompass. It cannot act in the assembly of the House of Commons without provoking ripples.

"I have lived nearly all my life in the House of Commons and I believe it to be the enduring guarantee of British liberties and democratic practices." Parliament comes first with Churchill. He has given more of himself to it than he has to anything else he has done. His achievements as an author, administrator, and statesman, vast though they are, do not reach the level of his genius as a Parliamentarian. Parliament is his stage and Parliament responds to him.

Queen Victoria still reigned when Sir

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Winston first took his seat. He had been jerked into national prominence by his adventures in South Africa; he was familiar with battle and was physically brave; but even he was intimidated by the House of Commons' serene and unswerving timelessness. Then he could not speak without memorising every word beforehand. The way Churchill approached his maiden speech was a sample of the future. He worked at it with a thoroughness infused by an energy above mere industry. Today, if he is to speak in the House, he applies himself as hard as when he was twenty-six. In the worst moments of the war he continued to put the preparation of a Parliamentary speech in front of all his other duties. In the *Hinge of Fate* he writes of the speech he made on January 27th, 1942, when the war had brought the biggest single accumulation of disasters: "I did not grudge the twelve or fourteen hours of concentrated thought which ten thousand words of original composition on a vast, many sided subject demanded. . . ."

This unremitting work is at the heart of his success as a speaker. He is not a natural speaker, and in his set speeches every word has been gone over several times. But he knows what he is going to say so well that he does not read, but acts his phrases: yet it is more than acting, because he is the author of what he says and believes in it. He may deliberately provoke an interruption: the answer to it is often already written in his notes. Now he is even able to speak briefly, but uncomfortably, without preparation; and retorts and answers to questions from long practice and custom come more quickly to his mind: in this sense, his brain moves faster in old age than it did when he was young. But for years he floundered if he had to leave the script. As F. E. Smith (Lord Birkenhead) once remarked, Sir Winston "devoted the best years of his life to the preparation of his impromptu speeches."

So it was with his maiden speech. He arrived to speak in a debate on the South African war with a number of different speeches ready to deliver. One of them, he hoped, might be suitable. As the moment that he would be called grew closer, he despairingly tried to think of some opening sentence which would smooth the way into his speech and appear to have some connection with the speech then being delivered by the David Lloyd George whom he had to follow. Lloyd George had put on the order paper an amendment moderately critical of the Government, but it was not certain whether he would move it. Aid came to the young Churchill in his unhappiness from an old Parliamentarian, a Mr. Bowles, sitting nearby. Only someone who has had to make a speech in the House and is certain at the last moment that he cannot do it can fully understand the extent of Mr. Bowles' charity as he whispered to the young Churchill, "You might say 'instead of making his violent speech without moving his moderate amendment, he had better have moved his moderate amendment without making his violent speech.'" Churchill repeated the words as he stood for the first time in the House of Commons. The Commons is always pleased if it can help a new speaker through the agony of his first speech. There was a glad laugh and Mr. Churchill put the most appropriate of his prepared speeches into gear and drove away.

His speech, while not outstandingly brilliant, was not as colourless as most maiden speeches. The Conservative Government, and he was then a Conservative, were for the ruthless prosecution of the war and for damnation to all Boers. "If I were a Boer," he said, "I hope I should be fighting in the field." He went on to demand that it should be made "easy and honourable for the Boers to surrender." The whole of his speech, which generously recognised the claims and feelings of the Boers, contradicted the trend of Government and majority thinking. That may not seem much to the non-Parliamentarian, but for an ambitious young man to go against his own Government in his first speech needed courage.

If application was the ground on which his Parliamentary career was built, courage was its foundation. Courage is the element which lifts a member out of the ordinary. Many are brash, but few are brave. Courage is not con-

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trariness, not a mere delight in shocking. It is the deliberate refusal of a man who has the ability to be politically successful to shirk saying things he feels to be true, even though no one would comment at his failure to say them. It is something more than sincerity, although that is included: a man can be sincere in everything he says and yet take care not to say anything which will disconcert his potential supporters.

No Parliamentarian can be of the first rank without courage, and Churchill has always showed it. In the thirties he could at any time have joined the Government if he had been prepared to compromise with his views on the dangers of Nazism. He could have softened his criticisms of the Government's feebleness in front of Hitler, he could have been less frank without being in any way untruthful. But he thought it was his duty to Parliament to speak as he did, and he knew that unless he used emphatic language his warnings would have no effect at all. Office was worth less to him than truth; and that, since human beings are as frail in politics as elsewhere, is remarkable.

Simply to have the ability to endure hours of preparatory drudgery, and a courage large enough to impress the House, is not sufficient for the establishment of a dominating role in Parliament. Members of the House of Commons, individually, are fallible in their estimates of each other; collectively they rarely make a mistake. The combined judgment of the House of Commons on a man's character and abilities contains a high element of accuracy. No assembly can be more forgiving, more charitable, more shrewd or fairer. It searches out all a man's qualities and weaknesses as they show up in good fortune and in bad, in the interplay of debates, and in the association of many years with his colleagues. It is the proof of Winston Churchill's stature as a Parliamentarian that he has passed through all the tests and because of the huge volume of accumulated respect he has earned in the House he can now get away with breaches of the rules and traditions which would never be allowed to others.

The British temperament is peculiarly suited to Parliamentary government and it has fashioned a chamber of exactly the right shape in which to exercise it. Churchill has understood that completely, as the memorandum he wrote as Prime Minister on the rebuilding of the blitzed House of Commons chamber shows:

> . . . Its shape should be oblong and not semicircular. Here is a very potent factor in our political life. The semicircular assembly which appeals to political theorists enables every individual or every group to move round the centre, adopting various shades of pink according as the weather changes. . . . It is easy for an individual to move through those insensible gradations from Left to Right, but the act of crossing the Floor is one which requires serious consideration. I am well informed on this matter, for I have accomplished that difficult process, not only once, but twice. . . . Logic, which has created in so many countries semicircular assemblies with buildings that give to every member not only a seat to sit in, but often a desk to write at, with a lid to bang, has proved fatal to Parliamentary government as we know it here in its home and in the land of its birth.
>
> . . . It should not be big enough to contain all its members at once without overcrowding, and there should be no question of every member having a separate seat reserved for him. The reason for this has long been a puzzle to uninstructed outsiders. . . . Yet it is not so difficult to understand if you look at it from a practical point of view. If the House is big enough to contain all its Members nine-tenths of its debates will be conducted in the depressing atmosphere of an almost empty or half-empty chamber. The essence of good House of Commons speaking is the conversational style, the facility for quick, informal interruptions and interchanges. Harangues from a rostrum would be a bad substitute for the conversational style in which so much business is done. But the conversational style requires a fairly small space, and there should be on great occasions a sense of crowd and urgency. There should be a sense of the importance of much that is said, and a sense that great matters are being decided, there and then, by the House.

In making formality informal and informality formal Churchill has excelled. When he speaks, each Member of the House feels he is participating in something important and cannot avoid being flattered by the immense pains which have been taken to impress him.

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SOMETIMES a speech, because it has been prepared in the expectation of the House being in a different mood to the one it assumes in the event, may misfire. His speeches on India and Burma in the post-war Parliament were quite disconnected from the main movement of ideas in the House and made him seem like a materialised ghost from a dead age, posturing in front of perplexed and unhappy supporters. Once, in the 1945 Parliament, the Labour Party deliberately disconcerted him by a conspiracy to remain completely silent throughout the whole of his speech. The voice grew quicker and sharper, the hand and the chin were thrust forward to provoke the anticipated interruption—which was to be smitten down at once by the previously polished retort—but no interruption came. Instead of angry shouts there was an atmosphere of stolid complacency. It was difficult even for the great composer to make the symphony come off with some of the loudest instruments silent when their harsh background was most needed.

Occasionally Churchill has had periods of indifference or even arrogance towards the House, which it has resented. These cleavages have at times gone deep. Sir Stafford Cripps told me of a time during the war when, in his view, such a divergence had occurred and he said so to Churchill.

"Two things I put above everything in my life," said the Prime Minister, "God and the House of Commons."

"Well," said Sir Stafford, "I hope you treat God better than you do the House of Commons."

But these are only temporary patches of misunderstanding. Usually the touch is sure, and with time it has matured so that it is hard to believe that there has ever been anything better in Parliamentary artistry than the handling of the House of Commons by Churchill in his seventies.

Churchill has always paid great attention not only to his phrases, in which much use is made of the unexpected noun and adjective, but to the construction of his speeches. Since the speeches are elaborately fashioned in advance he cannot make adjustments to suit the vagaries of the House, as such debaters as Aneurin Bevan can. Consequently he has to impose himself on the mood of the House, and this can only be done if his anticipation of the likely reactions of the House is not too wide of the mark. During the early months of the 1945 Parliament he had a number of successes by provoking the interruptions he wanted from the great Labour majority—about half of whom were new to the House and easily tricked. Hearing him for the first time during the debate on the Address in 1945, I marvelled at the cunning way he trapped us. In the General Election campaign, he had made Harold Laski, then Chairman of the Labour Party, into a national bogey man. He had tried to convince the country that the Cabinet of a Labour Government would for the first time in British history be responsible to some outside Politbureau-like body—i.e. Mr. Laski and the National Executive of the Labour Party—and not Parliament. After the election Laski, still ebullient, had made a speech announcing that British policy in Greece was to be completely changed. In the House, Churchill dealt, in a style to become familiar, with the excited rows of Government supporters, still resentful of his broadcast suggestion that socialism in Britain would eventually lead to a police state. The more we grew indignant, the more he enjoyed himself.

MR. CHURCHILL: What precisely is Mr. Laski's authority for all the statements he is making about our foreign policy? How far do his statements involve the agreement or responsibility of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs? We know that Mr. Laski is the Chairman of the Labour Party Executive Committee.

LABOUR MEMBERS (derisively): Gestapo!

MR. CHURCHILL: Everybody has a right to describe their own party machine as they choose.

This is a very important body. I have been told —I am willing to be contradicted and to learn— that it has the power to summon Ministers before it. Let us find out whether it is true or not. Evidently it has got great power, and it has, even more evidently, a keen inclination to assert it.

I see that Mr. Laski said in Paris a few days ago that our policy in Greece was to be completely changed. What is the meaning of this? I thought we were agreed upon our policy towards Greece especially after Sir Walter Citrine's and the Trade Unions' report.

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Here a babel of fury and shouts broke out from the Labour benches, particularly from the substantial section that during the next few years was vehemently to criticise Mr. Ernest Bevin. Churchill was ready for the interruption because he had intended it. With great solemnity he stood squarely at the despatch box gazing almost sympathetically at the benches opposite:

I would say to hon. Members not to speak disrespectfully of the report,

and here he sharpened the emphasis with heavy point on each word and with the utmost significance on the last three:

or they may be brought up before that body.

The effect of this comical surprise was devastating on the crowded Labour benches which for a moment were transfixed with astonishment.

If his speech cannot avoid the use of many figures and technicalities, there are always breaks in it designed to restore the attention of the House, which may have wandered. In March 1953 he was obliged to make a complicated speech on defence policy. To relieve the gloom of the manpower statistics, there were at intervals of about ten minutes such passages as this:

I must now warn the House that I am going to make an unusual departure. I am going to make a Latin quotation. It is one which I hope will not offend the detachment of the old school tie and will not baffle or be taken as a slight upon the new spelling brigade. Perhaps I ought to say the "new spelling squad," because it is an easier word. The quotation is *Arma virumque cano* which, for the benefit of our Winchester friends, I may translate as "Arms and the men I sing." That generally describes my theme.

A speech on the international situation in December 1950 was designed to annoy the Opposition by the inclusion of a demand that during the difficulties caused by the Korean war the Labour Government should drop the nationalisation of steel. At times he had lost the sympathy of the House, as he probably knew he would. To regain it, there was a passage which suddenly broke the partisan nature of his speech and lifted it to another level.

When nations or individuals get strong they are often truculent and bullying, but when they are weak they become better mannered. But this is the reverse of what is healthy and wise. I have always been astonished, having seen the end of these two wars, how difficult it is to make people understand the Roman wisdom, "Spare the conquered and confront the proud." I think I will go so far as to say it in the original:

Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos.

The modern practice has too often been, "Punish the defeated and grovel to the strong."

In April 1951 he was dealing with a complicated argument about the appointment of an American Supreme Commander in the North Atlantic and the proposed appointment of a Supreme Allied Commander in the Mediterranean. He was arguing through a maze, which was becoming a trifle tedious, that the Government had made the wrong decision in allowing an American North Atlantic Supreme Commander because its Ministers had failed to keep a sufficiently firm grip on the negotiations:

This very serious mistake arises from the fault of planning from the bottom instead of planning from the top. When the top are incompetent to plan or give guidance, the process naturally begins from the bottom. We suffer from the fallacy, *deus ex machina*, which, for the benefit of any Wykehamists* who may be present, is "A god out of the machine." There are layers of committees and super committees, and the business is passed upwards stage by stage to a decision. When all the process has been gone through, the machine speaks, but what one gets at the end is not truth or wisdom or common sense: it is a White Paper. All that comes out of the machine is unreal and meaningless formulæ expressed in official jargon and accompanied by fatuous grimaces.

Each speech is a composition. Since the war they have in some respects improved on the wartime performances. Then he made orations in an atmosphere of party unanimity, and he was speaking to the country and the world more than to the House. They did not

* Sir Winston has always been amused by the fact that Winchester, probably the Public School with the highest academic record of all, has provided a number of distinguished Labour leaders such as Sir Stafford Cripps and Hugh Gaitskell.

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ignore the House but they did not give it first place as the speeches since 1945, delivered among the unrepressed and bubbling informalities of party discord, have had to do. In recent years, all his Parliamentary experience and wiliness have been blended with his great gifts of elaborately contrived expression.

When Churchill is to follow a major spokesman from the other side, if it is a controversial debate, he frequently begins with a skilfully wrought reference to him. In these references there is sufficient humour to neutralise slightly the anger of the opposition but enough venom to forecast some violent blows.

In May 1947 the Labour Government, during the course of the National Service Bill through the House, had been forced by a number of Labour dissidents to announce a reduction in the period of National Service prescribed in the bill from eighteen months to twelve months. The Conservatives, having indicated their willingness to support the Government in their demand for the longer period, were indignant at this reversal. Mr. A. V. Alexander, then Minister of Defence, after previously justifying absolute necessity for the longer service, was now obliged to give the reasons why the shorter period would do. He was naturally uncomfortable in introducing the amendment to the Bill on the Committee stage. When he had finished, Churchill began:

I have been looking around for something upon which to congratulate the right hon. Gentleman. After some difficulty, I have found at least one point on which I can offer him my compliments, and that is the control of his facial expression, which enabled him to deliver the ridiculous and deplorable harangue to which we have listened, and yet keep an unsmiling face. Indeed, there were moments when I was not quite sure whether he was not taking his revenge on the forces which compelled him to his present course of action, by showing them how ridiculous their case was, and how absurd their position would be when it was presented to the House of Commons.

A similar beginning to a Churchill speech came after the General Election of October 1951—the Bevanite split in the defeated Labour Party was still raw and there was a slight tendency in the Labour leadership to try to win over the malcontents. Mr. Attlee had just finished criticising the new Government's King's Speech on behalf of the Opposition. Churchill followed:

The right hon. Gentleman will excuse me if I say that he does not seem quite to have got clear of the General Election. A great deal of his speech was made up of very effective points and quips which gave a great deal of satisfaction to those behind him. We all understand his position: "I am their leader, I must follow them."

Herbert Morrison has frequently provided the machinery by which Churchill levers himself into a speech or into forewarning the Opposition that he is out to hurt. Early in the 1945 Parliament, when the dislike he had formed of Morrison in the War Cabinet was still on him, he said:

I hope he is not going to lecture us today on bringing party matters and party feeling into discussions of large public issues. There is no man I can think of from whom such rebukes and admonitions come less well. I would not go so far as to describe him in the words used by the Minister of Health (Mr. Bevan) a year ago, when he was in an independent position, as a third-class Tammany boss. I believe that was the expression his colleague used about him, which I resented very much at the time. I thought it was very much to be deprecated using disparaging expressions about important institutions of friendly countries.

He was still using Morrison nearly seven years later as a vehicle for getting himself under way.

The right hon. Member for Lewisham, South (Mr. Morrison), is a curious mixture of geniality and venom. The geniality, I may say, after a great many years of experience, is natural to himself. The venom has to be adopted in order to keep on side with the forces below the Gangway [where Labour Members critical of their party leadership usually sit]. Some parts of his speech were unexpectedly moderate, but, obviously, he had thought it necessary to prepare the way, as I often see hon. Gentlemen doing, in putting himself on good terms below the Gangway by saying a number of things in which I know he does not believe and of which I am sure he is ashamed.

The right hon. Gentleman accused me of being cowardly in asking my right hon. Friend to open the debate. Does he believe that I am really afraid

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of opening a debate? Why would I be afraid? I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that the spectacle of a number of middle-aged gentlemen who are my political opponents being in a state of uproar and fury is really quite exhilarating to me.

CHURCHILL enjoys a noisy House. As he said later the same year:

Hon. Members opposite will give me credit for not being afraid of interruptions or noise. It even would be much easier to be shouted down continually or booed down, because I have not the slightest doubt I could obtain publicity for any remarks I wish to make, even if they are not audible in the House.

The speaker who is the centre of a disturbance has, if he remains cool, an advantage over his interrupters. He can wait: no further business can be done, if he keeps standing, until order returns. It is he who has the floor. He need not give way to any individual Member who wants to interrupt him but he can make his own choice of a remark out of the babel to which to make an effective reply.

Today Churchill is brilliant at quickly selecting the right target. One of his most frequent interrupters is tiny Sidney Silverman, who sits in a corner seat in the front row below the gangway with his short legs hardly touching the ground. During a debate on the long delays in bringing German generals to trial for war crimes, Churchill was commending Harold Macmillan, who had opened, for what he called "his very restrained and carefully phrased speech."

MR. SIDNEY SILVERMAN (shouting): I wonder what the right hon. Gentleman would say if he abandoned restraint.

MR. CHURCHILL: The hon. Gentleman is always intervening. On this occasion he did not even hop off his perch.

During a debate about Allied Command appointments, Mr. Shinwell interrupted him to observe: "All I say to him now is that the discussions about the whole command have been taking place simultaneously." To which Mr. Churchill promptly replied, "They may have been taking place simultaneously but one ended before the other. That sometimes happens in horse racing."

When interruptions are dealt with in this way, it is the speaker who scores heavily. By staying unmoved in the face of hostility, a speaker can get an ascendancy over the House, if he has a strong personality and the ability to regain the thread of his speech. Churchill is not only unafraid of such scenes but welcomes them. He rises to the excitement, and if he is a little sombre at the start he is gay by the end. Sometimes he will stimulate an uproar to divert attention from the fact that he does not know the answer to some pointed question put to him by the Opposition, or that he is for once making a bad case.

A lively passage in the House is to Churchill an indication of vitality. He has several times remarked that politicians should not be too mealy-mouthed in what they say and he has never hesitated to live according to his dictum. It was of Aneurin Bevan that he said, early in the 1945 Parliament, that he threatened to be as great a burden in peace as he had been "a squalid nuisance in time of war." His invective against Stafford Cripps was more polished but equally severe. In condemning him for taking the leading role in the mission of three Cabinet Ministers which led to the independence of India, Churchill said:

No one more than he has taken responsibility in this matter, because neither of his colleagues could compare with him in that acuteness and energy of mind with which he devotes himself to so many topics injurious to the strength and welfare of the State.

Perhaps his most remarkable abuse was directed at Ramsay MacDonald when MacDonald was Prime Minister of the 1929 Labour Government, which stayed in office by permission of the Liberals. Frequently they let him down and the Government would either be defeated or have to withdraw some proposal or bill. Each time, however, that MacDonald was humiliated he behaved as though nothing had happened, and as if it did not matter. Churchill, who despised him, said:

I spoke the other day, after he had been defeated in an important division, about his wonderful skill in falling without hurting himself. He falls, but up he comes again smiling, a little dishevelled but still smiling. . . .

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I remember when I was a child being taken to the celebrated Barnum's Circus which contained an exhibition of freaks and monstrosities, but the exhibit on the programme which I most desired to see was the one described as "The Boneless Wonder." My parents judged that the spectacle would be too revolting and demoralizing for my youthful eyes, and I have waited 50 years to see the Boneless Wonder sitting on the Treasury Bench.

Nor does he in the least mind what is said to him. Once in 1947 I followed Churchill after he had made a speech deploring the grant of independence to Burma. I vigorously attacked him. Afterwards I happened to see him outside the Chamber and he kindly said that I had made a very good debating speech. I said I hoped that he did not think I had been too rude to him, and he answered, "I ask for no quarter and I bear no malice."

He can be mean and almost petty, but never for long. Up comes the generous side of his nature suddenly to dispel the animosity which he himself has created. This virtue is in such abundance that it touches magnanimity without giving any impression of offensive patronage. In an assembly whose businesss is almost entirely based on the clashes of human beings, this is one of the main qualities which, added to his others, makes him a great Parliamentarian. Related to this magnanimity is the dogged loyalty which he shows towards his friends or any member of his Government who is in trouble. Occasionally his personal loyalty may appear to conflict with the public interest; but that is such a human failing that it enhances and does not diminish his Parliamentary stature. A typical incident was when Duff Cooper, who as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster during the war had been in the Far East, was being blamed for the disasters in that theatre. The Prime Minister in the House of Commons flatly declared: "When I am invited under threats of unpopularity to myself or the Government, to victimise the Chancellor of the Duchy and throw him to the wolves, I say to those who make this amiable suggestion, I can only say to them: 'I much regret that I am unable to gratify your wishes'—or words to that effect."

This comprehensive human being lacks no emotion; nor does he avoid arousing every range of feeling in the rest of the House. I have seen him with tears on his cheeks and they are never simulated. He in turn can make the tears move on one's own. To those who knew Stafford Cripps well and who followed the course of his last fluctuating illness the poignancy of Churchill's tribute in the House of Commons was deeply affecting. After describing generously and accurately his merits, he suddenly, in referring to Lady Cripps, lit the pathos of the final situation.

> Our hearts go out to the noble woman, his devoted wife, who through these long months of agony, *mocked by false dawns*, has been his greatest comfort on earth.

He has brought the Parliamentary art nearly to perfection in every sphere. In my experience of eight and a half years, it has seemed to me that he can only be defeated decisively in two ways. One way to get under his armour is to suggest that he is either speaking against, or failing to uphold, some British interest. The other way is to take advantage of the slowness with which, in view of his elaborately prepared speeches, he grasps a new point or complication in debate or at question time: curiously, this has become more difficult and not easier with time.

Churchill is the only man of our epoch to be declared an ancient monument in his own lifetime. All his life he has screwed the maximum advantage from any position. It is clear that he is very sensible of the political usefulness of the public's present veneration. To be old has its drawbacks—why not try to counteract them with any benefits that age may incidentally bring? If he can persuade the House of Commons that it is in some way un-Parliamentary, unpatriotic, or unworthy to trip him up or to attack him, that is the fault of the House of Commons and of the public—not his. He does not ask for special treatment nor does he think it wrong of anyone to refuse to give it him. But if he can confound his enemy, by directing at him public and Parliamentary indignation that a great statesman and national hero should

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be flouted in his last years, he does not hesitate. The notice which decorates him, to the effect that care must be taken not to damage or treat roughly this national institution, is a political asset—but it is totally unnecessary as a means of protection.

As a Parliamentarian he has never scrupled to use any weapon which comes to hand. He may shrink from belabouring his opponents with some stick that attracts him by its power of injury, because it would be unwise to use it—but never because it would be unfair. If a debate is going hard against him, and he is in office, he does not, for example, have qualms about suddenly producing a document designed to incriminate his opponents, although its production may hardly accord with Parliamentary ethics. He will swiftly move from consideration of great matters on the highest plane to some very disagreeable party manœuvre which is accompanied by a look which says, "Well, we are all politicians, aren't we? Do not let us be overnice."

To challenge Churchill in the House is excitingly enjoyable. If it is at question time, he will sometimes look at you with a slightly amused air, wielding his hearing aid, unusually shaped like a lollipop, as an additional Parliamentary artifice. If a point goes home, there will be a sudden frown or perhaps quick indignation. If he thinks defeat is coming, and he does not feel in the mood to try to avoid it, he will not listen at all to what you are saying, and he will get up with a reply which has almost nothing to do with the subject in hand—but as it is probably a prepared reply, he will, by making the House laugh, appear to have won where he has really lost. If he is in a good humour and the question is not unfriendly, he may smile as he rises slowly to answer and the accumulated charm of decades pours out into the Chamber.

If the attack is by speech, and not by question and answer, then there must be nothing half-hearted about it. To rouse him, there must be a series of hard knocks delivered without the slightest compunction. After he has been banged at for ten minutes or so, the colossus begins to stir. At some point anger may be forced up in him. Then you have got him. He may be stung into making some impromptu observation which, if he had had time to think, he would have left unsaid or phrased differently. His defences are down, and for a brief, glorious second he can be destroyed: to rise again, as fresh and formidable as ever, a moment later.

This wonderful ornament to Parliament, and to British democracy, contains in himself all the contradictory virtues and defects which make the full man. Where he is dishonest he is at the same time honest. Where he is unscrupulous he is still fair. Where he is vindictive he is nevertheless generous. Robust and extrovert, he is capable of introspective thought. Keenly awake, he can slump into lethargy. The only other person I ever met to compare with him is someone whom he would feel to be utterly alien to him—Gandhi. Gandhi was a great man because he was not afraid of the elements in his own character. When a politician denies the evil in him he dams up a force inside him which will burst and destroy him or pervert him to second-rate usefulness. He must recognise to himself what he is and allow the bad and the good to move inside him. By knowing the bad and watching it he can canalise it constructively.

Churchill and Gandhi have had the ability to get energy and fullness from their faults. In them what might have been vice has turned to a mischievousness adding charm and lovability. Both were amazingly arrogant in their youth and both mellowed into justified, but not overweening, assurance. A mercurial quickness in change of mood and attitude has been common to both. Because they made no attempt to obliterate or conceal their defects both have managed to derive from them strength and an identity with vast numbers of their fellow human beings.

After all the brain power, the industry, the hard-won oratorical gifts, the acute political judgement, the patriotism, the tremendous driving power are taken into account, superb greatness is only achieved if at the end a man still comes through to himself, remains himself and is himself. Gandhi did it in India and Churchill has done it in Parliament.

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Christopher Sykes

Ghost Autobiography

MY title may suggest personal memoirs written with professional aid, but such is not the case. I mean the words of the heading to be taken literally. I am one who has haunted others in ways that are generally reckoned to be supernatural. I have been told that my adventure is of a kind well known to psychic investigators, and that it supplies a type of evidence that may one day lead scientists to explain the whole ghost business once and for all, but I would rather not go into that. I am not a psychic investigator, nor even particularly interested in psychic theory. I am just a plain ghost with a tale to tell, a true tale. I must insist on that last point.

The most suspect form of ghostliness, it seems to me, is table-turning. Seekers after occult truth who follow this method positively invite failure, for the fact that it is easy to make a table budge by a very slight pressure on one side means that the seekers cannot know for certain whether they are the victims of some sort of cheating, conscious or innocent. A youthful experience impressed early on my mind the strength of the temptation to either kind.

The scene was a week-end party in the nineteen twenties, at which the principal guest was a lady whose mystical gifts, exerted over thirty years, had gained her a world-wide reputation. After dinner one night she proposed that we should all get round a table in a darkened room and approach the denizens of whatever lands lie "on the other side." She was of advanced middle age, but the other guests (with an exception), were young, and unusually frivolous even in that frivolous time. It followed that, as we sat round the table in the dark, there was so much giggling that it was impossible to create that tranquil and silent atmosphere which we suppose to be necessary for psychic manifestations. But the great mystic was equal to the occasion. She was far from even-tempered, and she forcefully dismissed giggler after giggler from the room, until only the serious enquirers remained. They included the exception to the rule of youth, a lawyer. In the darkened room we now became accessible to those appropriate feelings of gloom and horror which the gigglers had so effectively prevented. We sat on in a black and absolute stillness which seemed after a while to surround one like a living physical presence. Then, at last, after a long time, things happened. Without warning, the table began to move, began to turn, began to rise. To what seemed a height of several feet did it rise, then rapidly returned to the floor. There was a breathless pause while the lawyer was heard to stand up. "I am sorry," he said angrily, "but I cheated." The great mystic could be heard breathing quickly and heavily, but before she could speak, the lawyer added: "I simply couldn't stand the boredom any longer." He strode to the door, identifiable by a golden thread beneath it, and left the room with a slam.

MOST table-turners are less honest, and less conscious of their dishonesty, than this stern jester. I was to remember the incident twenty years later, when I was on a military mission to eastern France in the winter after the war.

I had orders to discover what I could about a number of men of my regiment who were still missing though it was known that most of them had been taken prisoner. The result of my first researches was the discovery that some of them had been murdered after capture, but that the majority had been last seen in a

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Gestapo-run concentration camp in Alsace. I had also discovered that the disappearance of our men was part of a large and terrible movement, the Nazi policy of mass-slaughter as it affected certain categories of war prisoners, and so I urged in my report that a small and expert commission should be sent out to work in conjunction with the French and American authorities. My recommendation was approved, and the result was the arrival, with eight specialised N.C.Os, of an Intelligence Officer with claims to be considered the most brilliant specimen of his kind in the British Army. I will call him Major Preston. My own rough calculations were soon superseded by those of this brilliant and fox-like figure. In a few weeks the truth of the story was plain. The missing men, and numerous French and American men with them, had all been handed over to the Himmler organisations, and all murdered by them. But though there could be no doubt about this conclusion the investigation could not be closed immediately, because proof was wanting in the case of eight of the men. Of these eight no trace was discoverable after they had left the Alsatian concentration camp on the approach of the Allied Armies. It took the Commission many weeks more work to solve this final problem, and perhaps they never would have solved it by natural means.

One day when I was in Paris on other business, I ran into Major Preston who was spending a couple of days there to consult the Ministry of War. We went to his office together and I heard about the progress of the Commission. He had been able, he told me, to establish a full and definitive record of Himmler atrocity covering a large area of France and Germany; he was an enthusiast for his work and he excitedly showed me massive volumes of typed reports, great piles of dossiers and charts and tables and comparative maps, and a whole library which he had compiled of incidental information about Nazi organisation; but in the end he was forced to admit with reluctance, when I asked him, that he still knew nothing at all about the eight men. When I pressed him on this part of his investigation he told me something very strange.

He told me that one day he and his men were in a state of violent exasperation at the way trail after trail which seemed to point towards the eight men led in fact nowhere, and that, as a sort of desperate joke, they sat round the office table, cleared it of papers, and addressed questions to the dead. The response was amazing and instant. The table rose, fell, bounded, dragged its human following to different parts of the room, and repeatedly banged a leg on the floor. In the harshest light of day it did everything that that other table had so signally not done in the dark for the impatient lawyer; did it with the least prompting. The immediate difficulty, indeed, was to devise some simple and economic mode of word-transference between the seekers and their loquacious furniture. Tapping was discarded in favour of the alphabet and a glass, and thereafter the table was co-opted, became a prominent member of Major Preston's staff, and was put to work daily.

THEN came the difficulty. Then came the snag. The table—and by the table I mean usually the alphabet and the glass—could give (or so it seemed) precise and immensely detailed information about any matter which had already been examined by those asking, but could give no information outside experience. Let me explain. If you asked about any place you had visited, it could tell you anything you wanted to know, and far more than even a Preston could discover for himself by his own observation; but if you asked about somewhere you had never visited, or about incidents that you had not investigated personally, the table could tell you nothing, and sometimes refused questions, so Preston told me, in an angry fashion. I asked what he meant by that.

"Well," he said, "the other day I was talking to Jimmy [one of the murdered men], and I said, 'Look, Jimmy, if you can tell me so much about what I half know already, why can't you tell me what I don't know at all, and most want to know?' And the answer to that was 'Why do *you* play with fire?' "

I asked how he got in touch with Jimmy and others, and he told me that the procedure was exactly like ringing up a large telephone

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exchange. You got on to the Spirit World in general, then asked for British Army World War II. Lines got crossed sometimes and you got British Army World War I by mistake, or even the Crimea. Sometimes your section was engaged and you were told to try again in half an hour. Sometimes the table was dead, but this was about as uncommon as an accidentally dead telephone. I felt sure there was something wrong, something in the story that everyone had missed. I told Preston about the mystical lady and the lawyer.

"The question does not arise here," he said, "because not only is there no need but the results are not what you could get by cheating. You remember Dick's sophisticated slang, don't you? He came through to my sergeant-major and chief clerk the other day while I was away in Carlsruhe. His answers were quite meaningless to them until I translated them when I returned that evening."

"Do you believe they were really talking to Dick?"

"Don't ask me what I believe. I never asked for ghosts. It started as a joke. The ghosts just came, arrived, gate-crashed. There they are. They say they are the ghosts of our friends. They never tell lies. I don't think about it further."

The next week I was told to go to Alsace to attend a ceremony at which members of the French Resistance received the official thanks of the British Government for their help to British soldiers. At that ceremony I met a returned French war prisoner who told me that in Germany a year back he had met *eight* men of my regiment in a small out-of-the-way country house which had been commandeered by the Gestapo. I left the ceremony as soon as I could and went with this man to the house of a friend of his nearby. There, in the course of a long examination, I learned the truth. Our missing eight men had been taken to this obscure prison and murdered there, probably because the Gestapo, in these last phases of the war, were anxious to cover up traces of their abominations. There could be no doubt that these were "the eight." The Frenchman identified them from a large number of photographs which I showed him. I wrote a hurried report and sent it off by my driver to Major Preston in Carlsruhe, eighty miles away. Preston was so excited by the report that he drove over to me early the next day. We discussed what I had told him in detail. I gave him the returned prisoner's address in Strasbourg.

"I shall go to see him as soon as I can," said Preston, "but you know it is hardly necessary. The report is so thoroughly corroborated." He shook some papers at me with meaning.

I asked him what he meant. He then told me that at the very time I had been interviewing the returned prisoner, he and his staff had been working the glass and alphabet. For the first time, the spirits had adventured into new ground by mentioning the name of the hitherto unknown country house. "In fact," cried Preston, with wild excitement, "I had your report from the table before your driver came. You only confirmed what I knew." He thrust the papers at me. They were the records, all made out with military precision, of the afternoon seance of the day before.

The truth came to me with a shock. We compared the two accounts: mine and that received "from the other side" followed a similar order. The same phrases occurred in both. Certain of the ghostly messages were in French, and in that Germanic French moreover that is peculiar to Alsace. Preston saw the truth too. It was perfectly obvious that it was I who had been talking to him through the table. I, and perhaps the Frenchman as well, had had something very like a telephone conversation with Preston, eighty miles away, without knowing it. As surely as the lawyer twenty years before, we had cheated—but in absolute innocence and by awe-inspiring methods. And then our thoughts turned to all the rest of it. Was it not perhaps clear now why the table never went beyond experience? Was it not because the seekers around it were cheating all the time, were really talking to each other by mysterious means, and exposing those vast stores of memory which are normally buried in subconsciousness? I found our discovery profoundly disquieting. I did not, I still do not like the thought that I may be rapping out messages to people all over the world, all day,

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all the time, without knowing what I am at; and possibly "manifesting" in more arresting ways, causing terror or bringing consolation, but always deceptively. Or, equally disturbing thought, my cheating might have been a singular chance, and the bulk of the messages may really have come from the Spirit World, and I may have got caught up in that World's activity by some psychic side-step beyond my control or understanding. I cannot know what happened. I can only marvel at the dispensation whereby people like myself, without a particle of spiritualist faith, can move tables, and, for all I know, mountains too.

Burns Singer

Peterhead in May

SMALL lights pirouette
Among these brisk little boats.
A beam, cool as a butler,
Steps from the lighthouse.

Wheelroom windows are dark.
Reflections of light quickly
Skip over them tipsily like
A girl in silk.

One knows there is new paint
And somehow an intense
Suggestion of ornament
Comes into mind.

Imagine elephants here.
They'd settle, clumsily sure
Of themselves and of us and of four
Square meals and of water.

Then you will have it. This
Though a grey and quiet place
Finds nothing much amiss.
It keeps its stillness.

There is no wind. A thin
Mist fumbles above it and,
Doing its best to be gone,
Obscures the position.

This place is quiet or,
Better, impersonal. There
Now you have it. No verdict
Is asked for, no answer.

Yet nets will lie at morning,
Limp like stage scenery,
Unused but significant
Of something to come.

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Dannie Abse

Uncle Bertie

LAST week-end I had to go to Northern Ireland. I stood on the ship at the dock in Preston, waiting for the tide. Down below me sprawled the dirty brown water, hoofed, jigging and jostling in the wind. Above, as far as the delicate eye could see, the low grey sky. The engine of the boat chugged away and oil oozed out of its side making a rainbow-coloured scum on the swollen surface of the river. Seagulls glided, squealing in the wind. Aft of the ship, a dead fish floated on the waves, poisoned by the warm water from a nearby factory. The seagulls gathered over it inquisitively but wouldn't touch it. Uncle Bertie said, "I better get back, you must come and stay with us again," and the ship's funnel blew its sorrowful warning. "Well, good-bye, Uncle," I said. Uncle Bertie shook his massive grey head and his grey eyes watered a little. "You look like Clive," he said hopelessly. Again the funnel hooted and the seagulls screamed. I watched him walk across the dockside, tall and lonely. He turned round and waved to me and then he was gone.

Clive had been killed in France during the last war, the only son of Uncle Bertie and Aunt Cecile. They wouldn't believe that Clive was dead. They never locked the front door lest he should return one day. Uncle had said, should he return, Clive wouldn't want to find the front door barred and locked.

It was good to see Uncle and Aunt after all those years. Uncle still towered in the air, six feet four inches tall in his socks. Aunt was plump, but one could still see that she used to be the rage and beauty of the Swansea valley, and she still indulged in those fatuous remarks that had no point. Remarks like: Marriage is an institution made chiefly for men and women. . . . So silly really. Uncle, of course, had calmed down: he was no longer the wild young man who had created the legend of two-fisted, crazy, wild Bertie. Yet he spoke, as in the old days, of people as if they were cars. "That Miss Merrick," he would say, "is a nice job." No one accused Uncle of having brains, but cars he loved and knew them intimately and cleverly. Once he loved cars, fighting, and women—in that order. Now he was only preoccupied with his adoration for cars and his malice against the Germans who had silenced his beloved son. Sometimes, when he spoke, he planted oaths in his sentences like punctuation marks. Yet he was taken for a gentleman. My Uncle Bertie taken for a gentleman! You should have known him in the old days, back in 1934. . . . The funnel emitted steam, hooted desperately, and the boat slowly slipped away from the quay. Shivering a little, I stood looking over the railings of the deck at the dead fish, the grey clouds, and the seagulls. The boat left a trail of furrows behind it like a plough. Good-bye, Preston; good-bye, Uncle Bertie, Aunt Cecile. Uncle Bertie, I remember, in the old days . . . back in 1934 . . . in the summer of of the Heat-wave 1934 . . . I remember. . . .

* * *

IT was very hot and they sat under the apple tree playing cards: mother, Aunt Cecile, Leo, and Leo's friend Jimmy Ford. Uncle Isidore lay asleep in the deck-chair, dirty and dishevelled as usual, and I rested on the lawn, reading. Mother liked to have Uncle Isidore in the summer garden for all the insects in the vicinity were attracted to him, ignoring the other customers who only smelt of mere soap and pedestrian water. I looked up, watching the

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excited insects fly about Uncle Isidore who lay back asleep, unperturbed, as he exuded mysterious smells—odours that proliferated exotically in Isidore's ragged clothes, ragged hair, ragtime beard.

The card-players talked about the theatre. Uncle Bertie strode through the drawing-room into the garden, a huge figure of a man, with strong black hair, blazing grey eyes.

"Actresses," Aunt Cecile was saying, "are women who call everybody 'darling' to obviate silly errors. Ah look," she added, seeing Bertie, "here's Bertie. Isn't he splendid?" But Uncle Bertie was angry: he spoke in his special booming voice, "Nobody, nobody insults our family and gets away with it."

"What's the matter, what's the matter?" asked Uncle Isidore, waking up startled.

"Nobody insults our family and lives," boomed Uncle B. The card-players played on, ignoring him, knowing that it was best to be silent when Uncle Bertie had one of his moods. Uncle Isidore regretfully walked into the drawing-room. "That madman," he said, as if to himself, "he only thinks of cars—cars and fighting." For a moment Uncle Bertie looked as if he would pick up Isidore by the scruff of the neck. Instead he shouted, "What did you say, Isidore?" "I was speaking to myself," answered Uncle, quickly vanishing into the drawing-room. Uncle B. looked round puzzled. The card-players continued their game as if Bertie wasn't present.

"Nobody insults our family and gets away with it," repeated Uncle.

Everybody pretended to be deaf. I felt sorry for him.

"It's hot," said he. "Hard on the tyres," he added apologetically, taking off his shoes. He stood there, six feet four inches in his socks.

"Hello, Uncle," I said.

"You know, lad," he said to me in a loud voice so that the card-players could hear, "I can't stand the family being insulted."

I fell into the trap. "What happened, Uncle?" I asked. He smiled, the first time he had smiled since he had entered the garden. Then he looked round fugitively. "Where's your brother Wilfred?" he demanded.

"Out," I said.

Uncle mopped his brow. "Your brother Isaac," he said simply, to Cecile.

"Oh no," said Aunt Cecile, throwing down her cards. "You didn't hurt him?"

"Hurt him! Me! I, hurt your brother Isaac! Are you mad?"

"What happened?"

"Oh, he tried to hit me. He's a crazy fellah, that brother of yours, but, Cecile, I assure you, I just kept him at arms' length until he calmed down. I didn't hurt him at all; but I don't like anybody insulting the family," Uncle Bertie boomed.

"What did he say?" asked Leo.

"Say? He called me a big empty-headed swindler."

"But what did he say about the family?" enquired Mr. Ford.

"Well," shouted Uncle, "I'm a member of the family, aren't I?"

"So is Isaac," cried Cecile.

"That's not the point," argued Uncle. "Anyway, I assure you, on my oath, I didn't hurt him."

The card-players continued their game on the garden table, and the sun shone down through the apple tree, making a trellis of shadows over the card-players. Blackbirds whistled. Butterflies, boozed and drugged with August, crookedly fluttered through the air.

"Nobody should give birth to tadpoles except a frog," said Aunt C.

"Ha ha ha! ha ha ha!" roared Bertie, before noticing that no one else was laughing. He tried subtly to change his laugh into a fit of coughing.

Uncle Isidore had found Dad's violin in the drawing-room, and he scraped on it happily. The music, right and wrong notes, swaggered into the garden, over the hollyhocks, over the foxgloves, over the wood-shed. It was pretty, sitting under the apple tree, the sun filtering through the branches on to the dappled card-players. "Glory be to God for dappled things," I said to myself.

"How's Leo?" said Uncle Bertie.

"Fine," said Leo. "Twist, twist, stick."

"How's brother Wilfred?" said Uncle.

Nobody answered.

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"I said how's Wilfred?" shouted Uncle angrily. "How's his medical studies?"

"There seem to be more insects flying around now Uncle Isidore has gone inside," said Leo, giving the air a sweep with his arm.

Uncle Bertie stood there nonplussed, not sure whether to go or to stay.

"It's time we had a doctor in the family," he muttered.

"He's going to be a psychiatrist," said mother.

"Twist, stick."

"People who go to see psychiatrists should have their heads examined," said Aunt Cecile.

"Twist, bust."

When Wilfred returned from work, Uncle Bertie edged towards the drawing-room.

"Your Isaac," said Wilfred excitedly, to Aunt Cecile. "His jaw's broken in three places. I saw him. He's at the hospital. He said that——"

"I assure you I only kept him at arm's length," shouted Uncle Bertie from the drawing-room. "Anyway, he insulted the family."

To make up to Aunt Cecile, Uncle Bertie decided to employ an artist to paint her portrait—to catch her beauty on a canvas for posterity—or as he put it to young Philip Morris, "step on the accelerator and give us the works." Mr. Morris came to look Aunt Cecile over. Watching the artist gazing at Aunt Cecile, Uncle saw her again as if for the first time. He placed his rough hand on her fragile shoulder and shouted at Mr. Morris: "She's a beautiful job, my wife, isn't she?" "She is indeed," smiled Philip Morris, and Aunt Cecile said, "Go on with you." "Now I want this portrait beautiful," explained Uncle. "A good painting, I want. Precise, like a photograph, only in colour, do you understand?" Aunt Cecile smiled contentedly. "Don't forget," added Uncle. "Nobody, Mr. Morris, nobody insults our family and gets away with it." Everybody felt sorry for Philip; but when the portrait was finished and Aunt Cecile couldn't recognise herself on the canvas, Uncle was, nevertheless, meek as a lamb.

"You look wonderful," he said gently.

"I'm surprised you like it," said Cecile.

"Ah well," pronounced Uncle, "I have a feeling for Art." Everybody was puzzled by Uncle Bertie; he seemed gentle, a changed man since the portrait had been painted. Mild and kind, and kind of silent. Only when Wilfred came home one day and told us about The Challenge did we understand Uncle's meekness. Apparently what had happened, just before Mr. Morris completed the portrait, was that Uncle Bertie had been playing snooker in Ewen's Bar. "Pot the blue," said Mr. Ken Williams, who was watching. Uncle Bertie turned round, glared at him, chalked his cue, then proceeded to try and pot the pink ball. He missed. Five minutes later, Mr. Williams said, "Not that ball . . . this one." Uncle Bertie raised himself to his full height and said quietly like a gentleman, "Mr. Williams, sir, you don't mind me telling you to shut your bloody trap, do you?"

The game progressed under the arc lamps on the green table; the white against the red against the white. Spectators gathered round, quietly smoking, or whispering together, and Uncle was losing. Uncle mis-cued and Mr. Williams emitted a loud guffaw.

"Per-lease," said Uncle patiently.

"Pot the black," said Mr. Williams, a minute later. Uncle Bertie put down his cue, walked over to Mr. Williams, looked him up and down and said, "I didn't quite hear what you were saying."

"I said pot the black."

"Why, Mr. Williams?" asked uncle softly.

Mr. Williams looked round uneasily. One of the spectators dropped his cigarette-end on the floor and stepped on it. Uncle Bertie's opponent leant on the billiard-table.

"I'm just trying to be helpful," said Mr. Williams.

"I don't want you to be helpful, Mr. Williams," said Uncle.

"Well, you're just making silly errors."

Uncle Bertie didn't seem to hit Mr. Williams very hard. He just bunched up his fist, swung his arm and Mr. Williams' knees buckled. He fell to the ground at thirty-two feet per second, per second. It took twelve men to throw Uncle out of Ewen's Bar. At least it

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started with twelve, but ended up with eight. The door wasn't very wide: Uncle converted it into Horatio's bridge.

But why Uncle had been so subdued of late was because Mr. Ken Williams had challenged him to fight Mr. Jake Williams at the Club over eight rounds.

"Wants me to fight his big brother, the baby," said Uncle Bertie.

Uncle naturally accepted; but he was worried for he'd never fought in the ring, had never worn boxing gloves.

"He's making us the laughing stock of the town," mother said.

"He's mad," said my father, "just mad."

Uncle Bertie found sympathy enough though, from me and cousin Clive. It was the end of our summer holidays; it was our last fling. We used to rise early in the morning, that late August, and pace Uncle on our bicycles. Yes, Uncle was in training.

"I'm not taking any chances," said Uncle, "I've never seen Mr. Jake Williams." Uncle worried so. Up St. Fagans, down Fairwater, we'd race ahead of him and people stared and scratched their heads. Returned to the garage he'd dance around a sack filled with straw and paper, punching it, hammering it, until his fists ached. Once he slipped and fell into a pool of oil. His face black, he walked into the house and mother said we didn't want any coal today thank you. After that, he took to skipping as Clive and I twisted the rope round faster and faster, until he was puffed. He sat down on the stone step, gasping as we stared at him philosophically. "Leave me alone," he bellowed at us, though we hadn't said anything. "When you're my age you'd feel as if you needed a new engine too." Uncle was old, do you see, thirty-eight at least. Sometimes, he'd just forget to train or, alternatively, claim that he was getting stale. Then he'd feed us on ice-cream whilst he talked on and on about Rileys, Rovers, Humbers, Austins, Fiats, Lea Francises, Bentleys, and other cars which he had owned or would own.

When the men at the Club met Mr. Jake Williams, Uncle became the favourite. Even Dad put a pound on Uncle.

"Why, he's a midget—practically," said father. "I saw him myself. He's no match for our Bertie. I put a quid on him at 3 to 1."

"You ought to be ashamed," said mother, "encouraging this farce."

"Well, he's my own brother—there's such a thing as loyalty."

A row began which I couldn't understand, though I knew it was about gambling and money and horses, and Dad kept on repeating, "*Shweig*, not in front of the *kinder*, not in front of the *kinder*."

WHEN Uncle Bertie saw Jake Williams he gave up training completely. "Kids," he said to Clive and me, "it'll be a massacre." And it was. Everybody who was anybody crowded into the Club. "Children not allowed," said Mr. Lewis. "He's my Dad," said Clive. "He's my uncle," I said. As Mr. Lewis thought it over we slipped in. A square had been ringed off in the centre of the hall and two spotlights shone down from the balcony. The whole male side of our family turned up in their best suits, with red carnations in their buttonholes. Bertie had bought them the carnations. Uncle Isidore edged his way in without paying. "Why did you bring your violin, Isidore?" asked Mr. Thomas. "I'll play in the intervals," he answered.

Uncle Bertie became annoyed when Cecile wouldn't go. As Aunt explained to mother, "I'm not going to encourage him."

"He's mad," said father, "mad, mad."

"You're mad," mother replied, "from the same family."

"What's he want to fight everybody for?" said Dad. "He's perverted."

"A pervert is somebody one meets outside the channel of normal intercourse," Aunt Cecile quickly interceded.

There was a great roar in the Club as the contestants entered the ring. "Come on, Bertie the Bull," shouted the man next to us. Clive said, "Dad isn't a bull." "We trained him," I said proudly. Bertie said to one of his seconds: "I wanted Cecile to sew a *Magan David* to my shorts, but she said fighting was irreligious." Uncle, tall and huge in football shorts, jumped up and down in his corner, gave a knees bend and almost fell through the ropes. Half the

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crowd cheered. When he indulged in some shadow boxing, by accident he knocked one of his seconds out, and *all* the crowd cheered. Jake Williams was only of average stature, so the odds lengthened to 6–1. There was a hold-up as they revived Uncle B's second, and Clive said, "That's my Dad." Curly Townsend, the well-known football referee, introduced them to the audience: "Ladies and Gentlemen. This contest of eight rounds between Bertie ——"—the rest of his sentence was drowned in the mighty applause—" and Jake Williams, lightweight champion of . . ." There was silence, but for Mr. Ken Williams' laughter. ". . . Better known as Killer Williams. . . ." Stunned silence. The odds dropped, the odds turned round. Uncle didn't seem to mind, he just danced up and down in his corner. The bell rang and the boxers came out of their corners slowly. As the shouting died, Uncle Isidore could be heard playing "God Save the King" on his violin. Everybody stood up to attention, including Jake Williams. Just before Isidore finished Uncle Bertie took a swipe at Killer Williams who was standing stiffly with his arms by his sides. Curly Townsend, the referee, fished in his pocket and blew a whistle, beckoning Uncle to his corner, and the crowd roared. "It's not started yet, Bertie," said Curly. "The bell went, didn't it?" remarked Uncle. "Didn't you hear the National Anthem?" cried Curly. The bell went again, and as the roar subsided, Uncle Isidore could be heard playing "Land of My Fathers." Again everybody stood at attention and Uncle Bertie took a swipe at Jake Williams, who this time ducked and quickly stood at attention again. When the bell went for the third time, Uncle Isidore played "Trees" so everybody ignored him. Curly Townsend repeatedly blew his whistle but they ignored him too.

It was, as Uncle said it would be, a massacre. After all, Killer Williams was a professional. Uncle's right eye closed up and his nose commenced to bleed. By the second round he'd been knocked down four times, and each time he became more angry. "Take off my gloves," he cried. "Take off these bloody things—how can I hit him properly with gloves on?"

"Come on, Dad," shouted Clive.

The bell rang for the third round but Uncle wouldn't fight on unless they took off his gloves.

"It's silly," he shouted, tearing off his right glove, "fighting with these things on. Be reasonable, Mr. Williams, be reasonable, Curly, what do we want gloves on for—we're not children." The crowd roared. Curly Townsend blew his whistle and went over to Killer Williams shouting, "Mr. Jake Williams is the winner by a technical knock-out." Uncle stood there disconsolate, one glove on, one glove off, one eye open, one eye closed, and his nose bleeding. The crowd cheered and booed. As Jake Williams stood there with his arm raised, bowing to the spectators, Uncle Bertie dashed over and landed a swift upper-cut with his hammer of a bare fist on his opponent's jaw. Killer Williams sank to the ground, glassy-eyed, and the half of the crowd that was cheering booed, and those that were booing, cheered. Uproar. Curly kept on blowing his whistle, and Uncle Isidore played "God Save the King" and everybody stood silently to attention, except Mr. Jake Williams who lay horizontal. . . .

That was a long time ago . . . back in 1934. But yesterday Uncle Bertie, now older and grey, spoke of this great fight at his home in Preston.

"Do you remember, Uncle Bertie," I said, "back in 1934 when you fought Jake Williams?"

"Do I remember, do I remember," said Uncle. "I murdered him."

"Drink your soup up," said Aunt Cecile.

"He was a dirty fighter that Jake Williams," said Uncle.

"Clive was alive then," said Aunt Cecile.

We ate on in silence. All of us, I think, were dreaming of different things.

"His fighting days are over," said Aunt Cecile.

Outside, there was a screech of brakes and a dull crash. Uncle leapt up from the table. "Damn it!" shouted Uncle. "If that lorry driver's knocked my new Triumph at all. . . ." He walked briskly to the front door.

"You stay where you are," Aunt Cecile said to me.

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Outside, I could hear Uncle and the lorry driver arguing. Aunt smiled, "If music be the food of love . . . eat on."

Uncle returned, moody, grumpy. "He insulted me, Cecile," he burst out. "He buckled the bumper of the car. He insulted the family and I wanted to hit him." Uncle stood up, tall, wilting, shaking with rage. "I'm over fifty. . . . I haven't the strength to hit a man any more. Haven't got the strength."

"Sit down," said Aunt Cecile. "Finish your meal."

"It's a dreadful thing to be old," said Uncle, looking out of the window.

* * *

THE mechanical voice of the loudspeaker floated disembodied over Smith's bookstall, across the station clock, mingling with porters, passengers, and sad farewells. The voice said Newport, Swindon, Reading, Paddington. It seemed the voice of Fate. More appropriately it should have called out Abyssinia, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Spain. Dead, dead, 1939. Then there was a shriek that I thought came from Europe but it was only the plaintive call of the train, and the big engine blew two ghosts of steam out of its unstitched sides. Lots of people rushed out of the Refreshment Room.

"We'll be back on Monday," said mother. "Be a good boy."

"Study hard," said my father, smiling uncomfortably.

"He'll be all right with me," said Uncle Bertie, towering massively, good-humouredly, over the crowd. Mother, father, Leo, bundled into the Paddington train.

"Bring me back some wedding cake," said Uncle Bertie, "and all good wishes to Sammy."

"What did you say R.S.V.P. meant?" I asked Leo.

"Remember to Send the Vedding Present," he replied.

"Garn," I said.

They sat in the G.W.R. third-class carriage with its pictures of Mevagissey, Torquay, Porthcawl, and an elongated map of Southern England. Mother looked soulful leaning out of the window. Mother was always ready to shed a lonely tear—at deaths, weddings, good-byes, illnesses, *bamitzvahs*, births. Songs like "My Yiddisha Momma" prompted her generous sentimental soul to rise to her eyes in a tearful grey mist.

"Don't waste your time at Uncle Bertie's," shouted my father over mother's shoulder; mother only planted a damp kiss on my reluctant cheek. "Heavens," she said, as the train gave a little jerk forward, "did I turn the gas off in the oven?"

The train moved forward and hands leapt out of the windows waving, waving, smaller and smaller, out of sight.

The voice began again, "The next train to come into platform two. . . ." But Uncle Bertie took my arm and strode towards the nearest exit. I said to Uncle, "I once saw a man have an epileptic fit in a train." All he remarked was: "That cousin of yours, Sammy, getting married. What a mug!"

My American cousin Sammy was, as you've guessed, going to be married in London that week-end and my family had been invited up for the wedding. Wilfred was going to travel from Abergavenny where he was now working as a doctor. It would be a regular family reunion, and my mother had bought a new hat. Only I couldn't go to London because of the proximity of my examinations. Uncle Bertie and Aunt Cecile had offered to look after me for the week-end and after many doubts and reservations mother had agreed. There had, though, been a terrible argument first.

"I wouldn't let my son stay with that *meshuggana* Bertie," mother had said.

"He's my brother," Dad protested.

"Cain was Abel's brother," replied Mam. "Everybody says your Bertie is mad, everybody. He *is* mad," proclaimed mother definitely.

"Things are very bad for him now in the business."

"Bad, bad . . . he's bad," said mother. "Do you know he even carries a gun on him now?"

"Since when?" asked Dad.

"Since last week," said mother. "He's got a holster under his coat."

"You believe everything," said father. "And you talk too much in the butcher's shop."

Whenever Dad wished to defeat my mother

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in argument he would accuse her of gossiping. Having pulled out his trump card he would never say another word, but shut his jaw tight, deaf to any of my mother's protestations.

As Uncle Bertie and I walked back through crowded St. Mary's Street I asked Uncle about the gun.

"Yes," he said. "You can never tell when you may meet a burglar."

As he hesitated before a jeweller's shop, peering distractedly through the window-pane, I imagined him mask over face, trilby hat well down over his eyes, gun in one hand and a brick in the other.

"That," he said, pointing at a necklace, "is *Art*." He nodded his head agreeing with himself. "Wish I could buy it for Cecile," he added.

Ever since Philip Morris painted Aunt Cecile, Uncle Bertie had a thing about Art. Everything he liked, he described as Art, Great Art, whether it was a motor-car or merely Aunt Cecile's cooking. Now Uncle Bertie stared and stared through the shop window, unwilling to come away. A policeman nearby gazed at him curiously.

"The Bobby is watching you," I said.

Uncle Bertie turned round nastily and said to the policeman, "Anything wrong?"

"No, sir."

We shuffled away, with Uncle Bertie muttering, "If you vant to buy a vatch, buy a vatch; if you don't vant to buy a vatch get avay from my bloody vinder!"

"Remember to Send the Vedding Present," I said, and we smiled at each other.

When we returned to Uncle's house in Albany Road (he lived near The White Wall in the only house in the street that had not been recently painted) Cecile rose from the chair, full of complaints. Why didn't Uncle do this, why didn't Uncle do that? There's no money coming into the house, she protested, bills, bills, everywhere.

"Wait until Dad sees Mr. Simon," said cousin Clive loyally.

"Why did you pay off all Uncle Isidore's debts when he died?" grumbled Aunt Cecile.

Uncle Bertie pretended not to hear but pulled the black mangy cat on to his lap, and stroked it until it purred fiercely.

"Makes a noise like a motor-car," said Uncle Bertie, looking at the cat proudly.

"And talking about cars, why don't you sell the Rover?" said Aunt Cecile.

"Things are not that bad," said Uncle Bertie. "There's going to be a boom soon."

"You've said that for ten years," nagged Auntie. "You don't realize. It's about time we had some luck. I tell you, if we dropped a piece of toast on the floor it would fall butter-side downwards."

"You wait until I've had my little talk with Mr. Simon," said Uncle.

"Yes, you wait," said Clive.

"You'll probably say the wrong thing and offend him," said Aunt Cecile.

"Me say the wrong thing?" objected Uncle.

"All we need is cancer," said Auntie gloomily.

"Cancer, *schmancer*," replied Uncle Bertie. "What does it matter as long as you've got your health!"

"Or sell some of those china figures," said Cecile, pointing to the sideboard. "They're worth a few pounds."

"That is Swansea china," shouted Uncle exasperated. "That is *Art*. My God," he added, pushing the cat to the floor, "don't you appreciate *Art*?" He brushed down his trousers vigorously, trying to remove the moulting hairs of the two-eyed cat.

"Come on, love," he said, "let's have a cup of tea."

"Can't you wait until Mr. Simon comes?" she said, but she went into the kitchen all the same.

When she was out of hearing, Clive winked at his father as if they shared a secret.

"I've got the bottles," my cousin said.

Uncle rubbed his hands gleefully.

"Come into the garden," Clive said to me.

"How many bottles?" asked Uncle.

"Six."

And they motioned for me to join them as they walked through the open garden doors.

The garden lay resplendent in the promise of summer. August would be soon and the exams over. August would arrive with tennis players and sipping iced lemonade on the veranda. There would be the salt smell of the sea on the

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hands and emptying sand from holiday pockets. There would be a sentimental tune like "Deep Purple" and the sound of someone diving into the swimming-pool with a blank explosion. Summer nights would saunter along the low-down streets and lighted windows would float high up in the black air.

"Do you think she'll hear?" asked Clive.

Near the wall, at the end of the garden, Clive had arranged six medicine-bottles all in a row.

Uncle didn't reply to my cousin's question but just pulled the gun out of its holster, aiming at one of the bottles. There was the loud report of a gunshot and one of the bottles flew into a spray of pieces. From the lilac tree three birds shot out as if fired from a catapult.

"Well shot," applauded Clive.

But they waited to see if Aunt Cecile would come out of the kitchen protesting. Nothing happened except in the listening air the distant ring of a front-door bell could be heard. Uncle Bertie fired again. This time Auntie pushed her head through the kitchen window. "What are you doing?" she shouted.

"Just testing, just testing," lied Uncle.

"That's the front-door bell," Aunt Cecile cried. "It's probably Mr. Simon."

Uncle Bertie returned his gun into the holster and ambled back into the house.

"Your Dad's a character," I said to Clive.

"See that dustbin," said Clive. The dustbin was full of holes. "He's a good shot, isn't he?"

MR. SIMON was a bent, benign little man, with grey sideboards and grey hair which he brushed sideways in an endeavour to hide his baldness—but his parting was two inches wide, anyway. He looked out of two brandy-coloured eyes mildly. His thin scraggy neck was surmounted by a winged collar many sizes too big for him and to this collar his right hand would tremble from time to time. His fussy black trousers fell over old-fashioned spats and gleaming black shoes. He put on glasses when he was introduced to Clive and me, and having scrutinised us carefully he replaced his spectacles in his inside pocket.

"I hear you're in the Art Game," said Uncle Bertie, all pleasantries over.

"I sell picture frames, amongst other things," Mr. Simon remarked kindly.

"Well, to come to the point," said Uncle, beaming.

"Have your tea first," interrupted Auntie, smiling at Mr. Simon.

"I don't mind if I do," said Mr. Simon, patting the cat deliberately, as if it were red-hot. Uncle Bertie was impatient. "The fact is, I can put my hand on thousands of frames."

"Well, then, I'm interested," said Mr. Simon reaching for a scone. "I hope this will be just the beginning of a profitable business relationship." Aunt Cecile poured out the tea carefully. "How is business generally, Mr. Simon?" she asked politely.

"There's going to be a boom, a boom any day now," interrupted Uncle with such emphasis that Mr. Simon withered in his seat and his tenuous eyes opened widely over his teacup, as they gazed at the company.

"Would you and Mr. Simon like to go into the front room to discuss business?" asked Aunt Cecile.

"For the details, yes," said Uncle, "but first let us—as a famous statesman said—let us generalise in the parlour." He began to laugh at this and Mr. Simon accommodatingly joined him in a correct high-pitched chuckle.

"Thousands of frames you have access to," Mr. Simon said, sucking in his breath.

"Thousands," said Uncle Bert, pulling out his hands as if he were telling a tall fishing story.

"I could buy thousands," said Mr. Simon.

"Yes," smiled Uncle Bertie. "But . . . tell me, what do you intend to put in the picture frames?"

Mr. Simon and Aunt Cecile gazed at him perplexed.

"What do you mean?" asked Mr. Simon, dropping his accent in surprise.

Uncle Bertie glared. "I mean what sort of pictures will go in them eventually?" Mr. Simon looked at Auntie for help.

"My husband is fond of good Art," explained Aunt Cecile, trying to smooth things over.

"Very creditable, very creditable," repeated Mr. Simon. "I like to deal with cultured business men."

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"I love *Art*," said Uncle encouraged. "Da Vinci, Botticelli, er . . . Rembrandt!"

Aunt kicked me under the table by mistake and Uncle rambled on unadmonished.

"I mean a man can sell everything but not his soul," said Uncle.

"Of course, of course," said Mr. Simon stupidly.

Aunt Cecile, endeavouring to stop him, pretended to have a fit of coughing, but Uncle Bertie was in full flow, waving his hands. "Art," he said, "is the Spice of Life. Art is magnificent."

"Yes, it is," said Mr. Simon bewildered.

Uncle, thinking he was making a great impression, worked himself into a fury of love for Art and Aunt Cecile helplessly watched him. It was then that the cat, who had jumped up on to the sideboard, unfortunately knocked down some of the Swansea china, shattering it on the floor. Uncle Bertie stood up dismayed. "That was great Art," he choked, and suddenly drew his gun out from the holster, shooting the cat dead.

Mr. Simon rose from the chair. "Oh Bertie," said Aunt. The whole room seemed to spin around, catching expressions of fear and amazement. Dumbfounded, dumbstruck, the company stared at the dead cat. Uncle Bertie stood up, the fulcrum of the room, his gun still smoking in his hand.

"It's dead," said Clive tonelessly.

"I love *Art* more than Life, Mr. Simon," explained Bertie, staring around the room belligerently, waving his gun.

Mr. Simon, still white in the face, soon afterwards remembered an important appointment and Uncle saw him to the door with the gun still in his hand.

"If you can assure me good paintings will go into the frames I'll let you have thousands next to nothing," we heard Uncle Bertie shouting in the hall.

WHEN the front door slammed, Auntie said, "He's plain mad and I must be mad to put up with him."

"The poor cat," said Clive.

Uncle Bertie came through the door, beaming. "I'm sorry about the cat," he said, "but I certainly impressed Mr. Simon." When nobody answered, he said, like an overgrown boy, all questions in his eyes, "Let's have another cup of tea, love."

"Look what you've done," said Aunt, agitated, overwhelmed.

"What I've done! Look what the cat's done," he objected.

"Dad, you're mad," said Clive.

"Shut up," said Uncle. "Never mind," he added, putting his arm around Aunt Cecile. "Today I saw a beautiful necklace I'm going to buy for your birthday."

"What with?" she asked.

"There's going to be a boom soon," he declared optimistically. "A boom."

"There's been one," said Auntie. And she began to cry.

"You're great Art," he said hopelessly, trying to console her, "Very Great Art."

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Norbert Muhlen

Democracy and its Discontents
1. Germany

IT is hard for a correspondent accustomed to sleeping late to indulge his habit while visiting West Germany; he is awakened early by the hammering and banging next door or across the street, where a house is being finished or where ruins are being torn down.

In the evening, he goes to a tavern that invites passers-by with both an age-old sign-board and an ultra-modern neon sign, but he can find no rest here either; at the next table, and the one across the way, the guests are "see-sawing"—a new custom, previously confined to the Rhineland at carnival-time, that has spread all over Western Germany. Arms linked around the table, they sit swaying, happily and in rhythm, from right to left and then from left to right, always returning in the end to the proper, upright, centre position. And they sing of a beerhall that stands in Munich, of a Rhineland maiden and Rhine wine, and of other time-honoured, homely things. The question of who is to pay comes up only occasionally, and then is settled with broad smiles; they have even merrier smiles as they sing a new song, which repeats categorically: "*Weil wir ja so brav sind, weil wir ja so brav sind. . . .*"

A public prosecutor in Nuremberg makes a hobby of searching for silence in the city. Like Diogenes with his lantern, he carries his portable recording machine about, and at night even climbs to the citadel that overlooks his city in an effort to catch the silent moment on his tape. In spite of all his persistence he has never succeeded. When he plays his recording back the next morning he unfailingly hears an incessant noise of motor-horns, hammering, or people singing somewhere.

THE old and the new mingle almost past recognition in all of West Germany. Often the new is only the old returned. In the ruined landscape that was once the old city of Frankfurt am Main, the Guildhall and the house in which Goethe was born were the first buildings to rise again; they were restored with hairpin accuracy, until they were there again "as if nothing had happened." Only a few Germans have tried to grasp the meaning of the catastrophe that brought about the destruction of the old order; for most, the destruction remained incomprehensible, it seemed meaningless, and so they attempt to make it "unhappen." The word "again" (*wieder*) has become the leitmotif of German life. The construction of a new Germany meant *re*-construction.

Indeed, things were reconstructed that had never existed before. The new pretended to be old—like the two new wine-cellars, seemingly blackened by the tobacco smoke of centuries, which were recently opened in Nuremberg; the shrewd proprietor knew what the public wanted, what would make it feel at ease. Elsewhere I saw a place, built in a ruined area, on which the mortar still seemed fresh; its oblong façade was decorated with a strip of canvas on which the ruins of a medieval castle had been painted, and over it neon letters proclaimed its name: The Old German Cellar.

The people who had lost everything bought themselves, when they moved into one of the small new dwellings built by the housing

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authorities, the same massive, smoothly polished furniture that had stood in their old, much larger houses. The same process was repeated in the reconstruction of the ruined cities—in spite of the protests, plans, and discussions of the modern city-planners. The streets were laid out once again exactly as they had grown up centuries ago, when their traffic consisted of men, horses, and wagons. The empty husk of the good old days, the burned-out shells of the past, the shattered exterior of the life of those years, was filled with a reproduction—as exact as possible—of its lost content. In the misery and nullity of the post-war period people sought refuge in the traditional; the past was better than the present and surer than the future.

The most recent past, that which led to the catastrophe whose monument the ruins are, has disappeared from Western Germany's field of vision. In almost ten years people have become so used to the sight of ruins that they hardly perceive them any more; the block of rubble in Cologne from which a single sky-scraper springs—it was built by an insurance company—seems only a somewhat overgrown garden. Ruins are the reminder of a nightmare which does not, even yet, belong wholly to the past, and which people would like to be able to forget. If, immediately after the war, it was often said that a new life would arise amid the ruins one might say rather, now, that the ruins remain standing amid the new life. But they are not spoken of, they are as "vulgar" and unspeakable as the thieves and prostitutes for whom they still serve as home in many cities. The proposal put forward in Frankfurt am Main, to leave one square block in ruins for ever, as a monument to the Second World War, aroused no enthusiasm.

Still, all over Western Germany, the really new *is* springing up. Proud as people may be of the recreated old, they show the visitor what is wholly new—the new department stores, banks, and insurance offices in the centre of the city, the new settlements and factories in the suburbs. The new buildings of the new Germany are sober, modest, and plain, built solidly, without pomp, imagination, or excitement. They had to be put up cheaply and quickly, and they serve only to shelter and comfort the present. The products of an age pregnant with the future, they may seem very "American" to those who do not know America; but they lack precisely that American pioneer spirit which is conscious, in each of its works, of making one more contribution to the better "new world." A joyless, almost sullen energy is expressed in the new architecture of Germany, what is "modern" in it seems the fulfilment of a burdensome duty. So little does the new German style of architecture seem "new" that it is referred to neither as "the new objectivity" (the name given it thirty years ago, when it was developed) nor by any other name of its own. Not much can be said against the buildings æsthetically, but not much for them either—they are there, and people are glad when they read the statistics of mounting construction and increased living-space, but no one is heartened at the sight of them, as people used to be by the sight of the old town and peasant houses.

So, like the geological strata that compose a landscape, four elements come together to make up the cities of Western Germany. There is, first, what has been preserved of the old—tradition; second, what has been destroyed of the old—the ruins; third, what has been rebuilt of the old—the restoration; and fourth, the new itself. Varied as the proportions of the mixture may be, the restoration everywhere dominates the picture.

In the 1953 election campaign the speakers of all the parties proclaimed, to my astonishment, essentially the same political ideology. Night after night, in meeting after meeting, all the speakers promised their audience the "*Rechtsstaat*"—a state built on constitutional legality and respect for the rights of the individual. No conflict, nor even discussion, turned on the basic political framework Western Germany should adopt, as had notoriously been the case in Weimar Germany. With not very significant nuances (a "free *Rechtsstaat*" or a "social *Rechtsstaat*") everyone wanted the same thing in 1953; so much so that the Bonn Republic, as it stands now, is a "*Rechtsstaat*," and will remain so for the forseeable future.

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Like the architecture of the West German cities the political structure of the West German state is the product of a restoration, although ruins and the beginnings of the new are present too. The *Rechtsstaat* is, first of all, the expression of a sharp rejection of the unconstitutional, illegal state, as embodied in the totalitarian dictatorship of Nazism. In the constitutional state no one is to be persecuted or killed because of his class, race, religion, nationality, philosophy, or political activities. And these rights apply to all, the lowest as well as the highest. But if the constitutional state stands on the ruins of a totalitarian dictatorship, its essence goes much further back; originating in the struggle against absolute monarchy, the very ideal of the constitutional state, too, restores the good old days.

With the same linguistic instinct that prefers to call new construction "reconstruction," the present political form of West Germany is named, not democracy, but the "*Rechtsstaat*," since, indeed, there are considerably more elements of the second in it than the first—every democracy is a "*Rechtsstaat*," but not every "*Rechtsstaat*" a democracy, for an authoritarian republic or a constitutional monarchy can also be states based on legality. Democracy rests on the participation of its citizens, who take an active part in public life and feel themselves responsible for the course of public affairs. If they do not approve of the policies of their government they demand other policies or, indeed, another government, so long and so intensively that finally their wishes are granted—*l'État c'est nous*—we, the people—the community of citizens.

Today, a very large number of Germans seem to have a quite different, much older attitude toward the state and politics. Like the stolid 19th century Germans (whose self-absorption and excessive peaceableness Balzac attributed to the habit, then widespread in Germany, of smoking tobacco in long porcelain pipes), the modern Germans think of themselves as unpolitical, and manage to be unpolitical, too. It is characteristic of the unpolitical man to maintain the total claim, so to speak, of his private life; public affairs he leaves to the politicians. Politics, for him, is like the weather: they are both things that happen to him. Like the weather, political events are not a wholly regular succession of worse and better days. There are occasional snow-storms, heat-waves and hurricanes in politics too; at those times the unpolitical man stays indoors as much as he can, and stuffs his windows especially tight with last week's newspapers, until everything turns quiet, safe, and pleasant once again. What can he do about it, what could he ever do about it? He is, after all, only a little man, a private person. As the product of his tradition and history, he is inclined to distrust democracy as a system imported from abroad, imposed by force and foreign, if not inimical, to him—or, at best, to misinterpret it as a somewhat special variety of government from above. It makes fine promises but does not fulfil them, since, indeed, the things it promises must first be fought for by him and his fellow-citizens; and he is so disillusioned with democracy, without ever having experienced it, that the word takes on an undertone of polemical irony in his speech.

The unpolitical man stands in a passive relationship to his state and his society, even when the lever of democratic action has been placed within his grasp. In the eyes of the *Unpolitische*, politics are made by "the authorities," *die Obrigkeit*; the state is governed by "the authorities," the course of public affairs is determined not from within a society but from above it—from that exalted atmosphere in which the affairs of government are managed. If it can be reviled, like the weather when it turns bad, it is accepted nevertheless, as a brute fact, with all the respect due a dispensation of Providence. Its representatives on earth, the really ruling class in the kingdom of the unpolitical, are therefore the officials, the state bureaucracy whose prestige dates from the century before Hitler, and who, after the collapse of the dictatorship, were left as the only element of order, the guardians of rights amid the ruins, the sum total of legality itself.

IN 1951 a peasant in the Dachau area quarrelled with the mayor of his village; in the course of their argument the mayor referred to the peasant as a "super-idiot" and a suit for slander

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was brought against him. The judge ruled that it was not slander if a mayor denied the intelligence of a citizen. The plaintiff's lawyer then wrote a protesting letter to the judge in which he said: "If I, your Honour, had called you a 'super-idiot,' would you not have considered that slander?" For this hypothetical appellation, the lawyer was accused of slander by the judge—and was found guilty. Equality before the law, a Munich jurist explained, was not infringed in this decision because in the second case a citizen had slandered "a representative of the authorities" and therefore the state, but in the first case only a private citizen had been slandered. That this decision was hotly discussed by the press and public may be an indication that today these ideas are in flux.

This is the modernised "*Rechtsstaat*" of 1953, a neo-Victorian—or should one say neon-Victorian?—Germany. In the hundred-year-old, renovated, restored, yet new régime, the unpolitical feel as secure and comfortable as they do in the restored and renovated taverns in which they sit at night and abuse it. But as long as they can abuse its policies without having to participate in them, they willingly accept it. Since democracy is a lawful régime and dictatorship is not, the unpolitical man prefers democracy; for democracy, not dictatorship, allows him to remain a wholly private person. But paradoxically—and unintentionally—he lends no more strength to democracy (which can only live with his active and responsible participation) than to dictatorship, which in critical times can easily take power over unpolitical masses.

Some features of constitutional monarchy mingle in the "*Rechtsstaat*" with those of an authoritarian republic and those of genuine democracy. The monarch is lacking for a monarchy, even if the elected head of the régime can look very much like the Serene Majesty of the good old days, or even begin to resemble the ideal of an elected emperor that impassioned the revolutionaries of '48: a well-meaning ruler, elected according to the democratic rules of the game, who believes deeply in peace, order, and equality before the law, with the well-being of his people lying closer to his heart than the will of his people. When, after his triumphant re-election, the school children in his neighbourhood honoured him with a torch-lit procession, he gave them, in thanks, a holiday from school the next day. The director of the school objected that according to regulations this could only occur if special Ministerial permission was obtained. Smiling, the guest of honour shrugged this objection aside; he would take the responsibility. The unpolitical could hardly have found a better head.

People are content in the new state—perhaps too content. They feel secure in it—perhaps too secure. The last elections only confirmed what one can see in Western Germany from day to day—that things are better than they ever were before. The fear that one day things may go differently is buried under the noise of singing, tippling, and motors. They are glad to have emerged from the worst, proud of their achievements and success; there is a roof over their heads again, wine in the cellar, and flowers in the vase—who would not be content, after everything that has happened?

OVER Rudesheim, on the Rhine, stands the Niederwald Memorial, "to the memory," as its giant bronze letters proclaim, "of the unanimous, victorious rising of the German people and the re-establishment of the German Reich, 1870–1871." The frieze, as colossal as it is atrocious, reminds us that the "rising of the German people" resulted, after the victory over France, in the coronation, accepted by princes and generals and brought about by an Iron Chancellor, of a Prussian king as emperor of Germany. Father Rhine and the Rhine Maidens, the spirits of war and of peace, the imperial eagle and a Germania lightly clad, except for her sword and oak-leaf, are all immortalised on the monument—but not the people who rose. "In good weather the monument can be seen as far away as France," the guide tells the curious tourists. If this is not literally accurate it is true symbolically: this is the Germany that France still sees.

The Niederwald Memorial was built in 1883. In 1953, Bavarian deputies to the Bundestag protested against the figure of the eagle newly proposed as a national symbol for the West

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German Republic; it had such long claws and glared at the world so suspiciously like a bird of prey. . . . Times had changed. In the market-place of Bayrisch-Zell, at the foot of the Wendelstein and near the Austrian frontier, stands a village monument to the dead of the First and Second World Wars and to those who died after 1945 in Soviet captivity. The simple inscription on its base says: "They were taken from their mountains." On the pedestal kneels the figure of a young man in the peasant costume of his homeland, the leather shorts and the open shirt; only the helmet on his head bears witness that he is a soldier—it is as if a strange hand had set it there against his will. One wishes that, in good weather, one could see the monument of Bayrisch-Zell from France; but weather that good, I am afraid, has not yet been sent us.

The mood of Bayrisch-Zell has replaced the pretensions of Niederwald. The new Germany lacks the Prussian centre around which the Reich was established—or, as the inscription says, "re-established," for even the completely new of 1871 sought to adorn itself with a façade of restoration by usurping the idea, so foreign to it, of the Holy Roman Empire. Perhaps it is in the German tradition for the new to present itself as a re-establishment of the old. In the new Germany, without a Prussian centre, particularism seems to have been restored too; the boastful spirit of Niederwald, counterfeiting a "rising of the German people," has been succeeded by the spirit of Bayrisch-Zell, the spirit of a people that loves its narrowly enclosed homeland and wishes to be left in peace.

But does not, perhaps, the façade of restoration conceal a new content? Is it not possible that, out of the very longing for the old values, there is emerging a search for *new* institutions that will embody them? There is some reason for thinking so. While the attempt is made to restore the "good old days," that attempt is also transcending itself, and is merging into a genuine European outlook. Talking to the unpolitical West Germans, whatever their age and class, one meets again and again a warm and often deeply felt defence of the idea of European unification; these people have realised that their security, the prosperity and freedom of their totally private lives, can only be maintained if that idea becomes a reality. Their main objection to their Western neighbours is that the latter are "still, alas, so nationalistic."

Slowly but surely, one feels, the new is vaguely emerging behind the façade of the restoration. The 19th century tavern is faithfully restored, but the kitchen, the cellar, and the menu are modern; the neon light over the door beckons guests who have roared up on their motor-cycles. The offices of one of the largest banks in West Germany are in a baroque palace it has bought and faithfully restored. Its rose-coloured front still reminds one of the aristocratic great lady who held her court here more than two hundred years ago. The great stairway with its gleaming walls leads to the offices, which imperceptibly blend into unpretentious new wings. They are more modern and more functional than most of the bank offices I have seen in other countries, America included.

The "restoration" was a first step. Even if West Germany is still clothed in the comforting garments of the past—the future is beginning.

(In forthcoming issues we shall present reports on "Democracy and its Discontents" in Italy, Britain, the United States, France, India, and Japan—Ed.)

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Ford Madox Ford

1873 — 1939

The lobbed ball plops, then dribbles to the cup.
A birdie, Fordie! But it nearly killed
The ministers. Lloyd George is holding up
The flag. He gabbles, "Hop-toad, hop-toad, hop-toad!
Hueffer has used a mashie on the green !
It's filthy art, Sir, filthy art!"
You answered, "What is art to me and thee?
Will a blacksmith teach a midwife how to bear?"
Bulldog of the King's English, what is art?
New threshholds, new anatomies? Or was
It war, the sport of kings, that your *Good Soldier,*
The first French novel in the language, taught
Those Georgian Whig magnificoes at Oxford,
At Oxford decimated on the Somme?
Ford, mustard-gassed and buried seven miles
Behind the lines at Nancy or Belleau Wood,
And five times blackballed for promotion, you
Emerged, a Jonah—O divorced, divorced
From the whale-fat of post-war London. Boomed,
Cut, plucked and booted! You had learned your art.
Sandman! Your face, a childish O. The sun
Is pernod-yellow, and it gilds the heirs
Of all the ages there on Washington
And Stuyvesant, your Lilliputian squares—
Here writing turned your pockets inside out.
But Master, mammoth mumbler, tell me why
The bales of your left-over novels buy
Less than a bandage for your gouty foot.
Wheel-horse, O unforgetting elephant,
I hear you huffing at your old Brevoort,
Timon and Falstaff, while you heap the board
For publishers. Fiction! I'm selling short
Your lies that made the great your equals. Ford,
You were a kind man, and you died in want.

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Paul Roche

The Woman in the Hayloft

AFTER I had left the little town of Trebes, I crossed the river, walked for a mile under the dappled moonlight of the plane trees, and came to the main road, laid out in a band of blackness towards Carcassonne. At the juncture of the roads a few shops and houses clustered untidily like flotsam at the meeting of the rivers, and there at an *épicerie*, which sold everything from postcards to peppercorns, I bought bread, butter, eggs, and two tomatoes as big as small melons. Then I swung my haversack off my shoulders on to the tiles of a café, ordered a glass of the cheapest wine, and sat down to supper.

The patron and his family were seated round a table dipping each his bread into a communal dish of stew, and, like the French of these days, received me apathetically. Cars with their luminous eyes stared from a long way off and then passed in a puff of wind. Lorries rolled by smelling of rubber and oil.

I expected to go on sitting where I was for some time, part bored, part in a trance of tiredness, and part watching the lined dull faces of the one or two middle-aged men who came in to drink; and all the time sipping my wine to make it last. But I had no place to sleep that night, and while the family were not looking I slipped the newspaper on the table into my haversack (thinking to use it as a groundsheet against the damp), and was waiting to do the same with a large printed advertisement for Pernod, when a man and a woman entered and sat at the table next to mine.

What I noticed first was their legs, for the couple were in shorts; and I noticed not so much the woman's legs as the man's, for these were the most beautiful man's legs I had seen in my life. When I looked up at his face I was surprised, for the legs were the legs of a youth, as strong as pillars, rounded and full of sap, but when I looked at his face I saw the face of a suffering man of thirty. He sat down with the air of one trying to remember something, and his face was set.

Then, when I looked at the woman, I was left wondering why I had not noticed her first; for she was the extremest example I have ever seen of hard-hitting, hard-hit, coarse, bovine, peasant beauty, ravaged by misfortune. With tanned skin and eyes black as a gypsy her hair hung down in coarse thick wire-like curls. She had lost the carriage and figure of youth, a figure that could never have been trim, but her body was still challenging. Scratches and a bruise over one eye were superimposed on sculptured features.

Immediately, she filled the café with her presence, laughing, asking questions, capturing the conversation, telling us how her husband had at last found work in the vineyards and she had not; how she had been compelled to spend the whole day idle and alone in a hayloft wondering, worrying, if, how, where her husband had found work, and when he would come back. And then she swept to her feet like a dancer, laughing loud and striding across the room:

"And all day long I paced my loft like a lioness encaged, pacing, pacing, turning, consumed with anxiety—bored to death."

Her husband hardly spoke, looked down or ahead of him with preoccupied eyes, and sometimes half smiled with a teased kind of smile.

I told them I was an Englishman, a student, who had been walking in the Pyrenees and now, like them, sought work in the vineyards. The woman said that she too was a traveller from afar and came from Denmark. "But that

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was six years ago, before I fell in love with this lump of a Frenchman!" And she nudged her husband in the ribs. He barely smiled.

What was beginning to strike me was not merely her robust gaiety and her frank friendliness, but an expression in her eyes underneath the looks of laughter.

She pressed her husband to a glass of wine.

"That extra special lovely wine I discovered here today when you left me all alone."

The wine was poured out into glasses shaped like transparent convolvuluses. The man seized his sullenly. She put her hand on his:

"Now, now, my darling, this is wine, real wine. Treat it with reverence. Don't gulp it, like the oaf you usually are."

It was difficult to say whether the man was amused or slowly angering at her teases; and it was difficult to say whether she was teasing him because she loved him or because she hated him. Each time, however, that I looked into her taunting eyes I saw a little more of the expression that was hidden there, hidden like a fresco slowly seen in semi-darkness, but a fresco with something sinister about it, some quality of evil.

When the question of my lodging in the loft arose, she was immediately enthusiastic, and he was non-committal, speaking for the first time one complete sentence:

"He is welcome to the loft, but it is not ours. He must ask the owner."

We walked out into the road. The moonlight was strong, and the yellow glare of the headlights broke it less than before. I was thankful they could not see my face, for I was blushing. What a blunder I had committed! Even a sixth-form schoolboy would have known better than to introduce himself into the bedroom of a young married man and a young married woman who had been separated all day. But now they were pointing out the direction of the barn and telling me to make myself at home should the proprietor allow me to enter the loft. They themselves were walking into Trebes to join the village dance.

THE loft was so utterly dark after the moonlight and lights of the road that I felt my way through it step by step, fearing to put my foot through nothing and fall into the cart-shed below. I wanted to show some apology for my gauche intrusion into married quarters, and wished to place myself as far away as the loft would allow from where the man and the woman had made up their bed. When I discovered that this was in the middle of the loft and that I could not get very far away from it, I gathered together all the free straw there was and made my bed at the furthest end from the entrance. It was the darkest corner, near the goods and chattels of the married couple (which my hands told me were ramshackle), and I hoped the most beautiful legs in the world would not trample on my face when their owner came to look for something in the dark.

I bedded down in the straw, disposing over me my café newspaper and the large sheet of the Pernod advertisement, and added some half-dozen sacks as blankets.

Only a few moments seemed to pass before I was awakened by the man and the woman coming back from the dance. The moon was now shining into the loft, but some bales of straw kept me in shadow. I coughed to show where I lay.

"So he let you in!" said the woman. Her voice seemed to have become sultry, almost threatening.

"Yes. But he did not seem very keen. . . ."

"Did you enjoy the dance?" I asked.

"We did not dance."

"But, why not?"

"Because my husband is an imbecile."

The man did not reply. I saw him pull off his shorts and toss them on to a pile. Then he walked to the edge of the loft and relieved himself over the side. I saw the lower part of his body in silhouette against the moon, and confirmed its perfect beauty. The two spoke to each other in grunts, too low for me to catch their words, but it was obvious that the woman had lost her gaiety. I saw her pull off her shorts (which apparently was one of those half shorts half skirts) and lay it on the collection of oddments near my feet. But before I could see them get into bed I was asleep.

The nights in this southern part of France are already cold in September in spite of the heat

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of the day, and I awoke feeling chilly—it must have been about two—and was about to stretch out my arm to gather in more straw, when I was aware of a rhythmic jerking in the straw near me. Without daring to move, I turned my eyes towards the place of the man and the woman, hoping, fearing, that it was what I thought. Ashamed, yet breathless, I looked, and then immediately, against myself, was full of gratitude that I could not see their bodies but only the strong stripling legs of the man, silhouetted, thrusting and prone-astraddled, as he seemed to bounce upon the hidden form in the straw. The rhythm was so clockwork, yet so forceful, and continued so long, that I could hardly believe it was the act of love. There was almost silence, only a little moan sometimes from the woman, so slight that is was like a breath of breeze. Although I realised my presence there was ignored, I was terrified of being discovered awake, and almost sick with the effort to lie still and hold my breath.

Presently the rhythmic jerking increased to a crescendo of effort, and then everything was still. Almost inaudibly the man gasped:

"*Je ne peux plus.*"

And the woman said, with a kind of hatred in her voice:

"*Egoïste!*"

Nothing else was said, but I could feel the rage that surged up between them. It was so complete that even my horror at what followed was without shock, and once again I was grateful that I could not see. At first, the sound I heard was baffling, then I knew it was his fists beating down on her.

"Say it again!" he panted. "Say it again!"

"*Egoïste! Egoïste! Egoïste!*" she hissed.

There was a kind of silent pain. I re-pictured the marks I had seen upon her face, and knew that his whole hand was embedded in her cheeks, her eyes, her throat—twisting, crunching. She gave a gasp, but when he let go his hold she taunted him again. He cursed and flung her to her feet; then half threw her half pummelled her to the opposite end of the barn, where she crouched in silence, naked. Quite suddenly there was silence and I heard the man rustling into his bed of straw, alone.

WHEN I awoke early in the morning, clear day was breaking into the loft, and the first thing that surprised me was to see the woman step out of her husband's bed.

"Jean, be quick," she said. "You know you must be in the vineyards by seven!"

I did not get up but lay in the straw listening to them arranging the programme of their day. I was still too embarrassed by the night's doings to show myself. The man strode about in his shirt; then squatted by a saucepan of water and washed his face. The woman pulled on her half-shorts and when he was dressed gave him some bread. He ate it hurriedly, drinking wine from a bottle. A lover's quarrel arose as to who should have the money for the day, she insisting that it should be he and that she would not eat till the evening so that he could eat well and have the energy to carry the heavy baskets of grapes and pour them into the carts all day. They fondled each other and kissed. Then, in his shorts, and a coloured handkerchief knotted round his neck, he swung down the ladder and was away.

Her eyes were full of laughter and mischief when she saw me sitting up in bed after he had gone; and she had regained her gipsy-queen élan: kindly, dominating, ready to do a service or to tease, and tingling with her exuberant capacity for pleasure. It was not until she had gone off to get me milk and had returned to sit by my side while I drank it, that I dared fully look her in the face. I saw that the ravages of the night were somehow not more apparent than when I had first set eyes on her in the café, and she had combed her long gleaming hair. But now I began to see in growing sombre clarity, like something seen by gaslight in a mist, the feeling, the fear, the morbid kind of fresco behind her look, which I had not wanted to find, and which I can only describe as a presentiment of a particular fate.

Once, some years ago, I had written a little brochure on the London Police, and I had been given access to the volumes of the private police magazine. I had not read much of them, but the pictures, morbid and disturbing, had fascinated me: photographs of scenes of crime, of weapons, of clues that had lead to arrests and to the scaffold; most of all, photographs

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of women lying where they had been murdered or dragged. These victims were often too mutilated to recognise, but there had always been a picture of her in bygone days to guide one. It was these pictures, these snapshots of her in her innocent days, which seemed to announce even under the camouflage of laughing eyes on some south-coast pier: "I am born to a fate you will never guess, a terrible fate."

"Sleepy boy, wake up and talk!" she laughed.

I looked at her and started, for what I saw was something I could not doubt at all. I did not speak.

The wine bottle had been a quarter full of wine, and it seemed characteristic of her that to give me the bottle so that I could use it for milk, she had raised it to her lips and drained it of wine. This draught on a morning stomach was now beginning to stimulate her natural gaiety and openness. Putting her arm in mine she laughed:

"Ha, ha! My husband doesn't know the offers I had yesterday. Four times in the café, and of course from the proprietor of the loft—silly old fool!"

I did not feel ready for such close talk about her emotional life, so I got up and rummaged in my haversack and brought out a shirt and silk handkerchief for her to wash. She began to wash them, wringing them out in a saucepan of water, and I took them from her, besides her husband's socks and shirts, and hung them on a line between the barn and the house. All the time we were together the proprietor, a grey-haired man of fifty or so, found reason to be in the offing, wheeling a barrow from place to place and moving forks and spades about in the cart-shed. He looked shifty and displeased.

"My biggest offer was from him," she winked. "Two thousand francs! He is furious with you because he thinks you have cut him out. Bah! I would rather sleep with a poodle."

We got tired of the old man's mouching about, and went up the ladder into the loft, where at least he was out of sight.

"Have you?" she said with a saucy look, making me sit down on a bale of straw.

"Have I what, Madame?"

"Cut him out, you slowcoach?"

I think I blushed, for she laughed for nearly a minute, ruffling my hair. Then she began to tell me of her conquests and how often she did it for money.

"And your husband?" I asked.

"Oh, he approves! A welcome addition to our income. So long as I don't do it for love. He is so jealous."

"And do you ever want to do it for love?"

As soon as I had said this I regretted it.

"Listen," she said, putting her face so close to mine that I hardly liked to breathe, "before the birth of my child I was like an iceberg embedded in snow. Since that time, six years ago, I am always on fire. But, for love I want to do it only with my husband."

She pressed my arm and pulled me closer:

"For pure physical satisfaction, however, I will confess to you that I burn for almost any well-made young man who passes my way. You see, it is impossible for my husband, poor thing, to keep up with my demands."

Again she winked, and cocked her leg over mine on a bale of straw. It was as massive as a sculpture by Frank Dobson or Charoux.

"Be sensible," I said. "The old man is just beneath, seething with jealousy and listening to every word we say. Besides, your husband may be back any minute."

"He is not supposed to be back till midday," she said. "But to return suddenly, just to see if I am in someone else's arms, is exactly what he is capable of. Oh, our life together is a struggle of love and hate. He has changed so. He went away for three years to the Indo-Chinese war because he was annoyed with me. He came back changed. The sight of death changed him. He has such moods sometimes that I think he is mad. And he forgets things."

I did not interrupt. I did not know what to say, and I was thankful the recitation of her life was distracting her.

"Hardly a day passes," she went on, "but I vow I shall leave him. Last night I would have walked out into the road naked—yes, I don't care—anything to escape from him. But I cannot leave him. He knows it. Without me he would go to pieces."

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"What happened last night?" I asked.

I saw the blood rushing to her dark face in sheer anger at the memory.

"Well, when we left you at the crossroads, it was to go to the dance at Trebes. I must tell you that never in six years has he taken me to a dance—I who am mad for the dance. When we got there we stood at the entrance looking in. He said how could we dance dressed as we were, he in his shorts of the *vendange*, purple with grape juice, and I in my skirt-shorts? 'And look at all the people in there,' he said, 'dancing in their bourgeois best!'"

"Perhaps he doesn't know how to dance," I interrupted, "I cannot."

"Yes, I have thought of that. It would be just like him to be too proud to admit it. And after six years!"

"What did you do?"

"I said I didn't care a fig for what the village idiots thought—they with their conventions and pretensions, and the education of mules!—if he didn't dance with me I would dance with someone else. At which he slapped my face and said I was drunk. Drunk? Ha! You saw the tiny glass I had in the café—I who can drink a litre on an empty stomach and still thread a needle!"

She paused, and her bosom heaved.

"So we came away. I could have killed him. Yes, I mean it. When we got to bed he asked if I wanted love. I was still so angry I said 'no.' Of course I wanted it. I want it all the time, from him. He turned on his side and said: 'Very well, in that case I shall sleep.' After a day's carrying in the vineyards, naturally the poor boy was tired."

Here the woman stopped and smiled.

"You know, he is not entirely to blame for his behaviour. When he was asleep I jammed my elbow into his side and forced him to begin. Ha! even with his vigour of a bull I wear him out. He cries out for rest, and when he has done his duty I will not let him go and he must begin again."

"Hey, you two up there!" came the querulous but timid voice of the old man from the cart-shed below. "What are you doing up there?"

"We are only friends," shouted the woman.

"I hope so. *Soyez sage! Soyez sage!*"

"The old dodderer is still hoping," she whispered.

Then, turning to me with a sweeping sigh, she said:

"Oh, to be free! To travel the earth! Each day to adventure to new countries, new towns. Yes, he too loves travel. But what can you do? There is the child. We are anchored to the child. It binds us together. We love the child. A boy. We are not married you know."

I asked her what her husband's work was.

"He has no fixed job but picks up whatever comes his way. Last winter he was a mason's assistant at Arras. Good money that. Oh, but after Indo-China he was a changed man. He said he was the same. But I saw at once that he was different. He has moods now, and forgets things. He has suffered. Six years ago his face was round and strong. Look at it now—pulled in, lined."

I pictured him as he had appeared to me last night in the café, sitting brooding, sultry, half smiling sometimes at her teasing. Ah, I thought, he must once have been one of the world's most beautiful young men, for even now his face was noble, with that appealing kind of manly helplessness that drives women mad and into these men's arms. Suddenly I shuddered, for his picture before my mind began to reveal to me the whole secret of that grim, distantly waiting, distantly planning face; something I recognised as of the old pictures in the police journal. For it was not only the victims that I had seen in photographs.

"I know what will happen," continued the woman in an earnest voice.

"What is that?"

"One day he is going to kill me."

I watched her expression change into one I had not seen on any of the faces of the unhappy women in the police journal.

"Yes, I am going to be murdered. But, but murdered for love."

And she tossed back her massive glistening head, and smiled with her whole strong mind and body, and I found that my horror was swept away as I looked into her eyes dancing in a kind of triumph.

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Letters from Scandinavia
1. Norway

THE LARGEST LITTLE COUNTRY IN THE WORLD

WHY don't these sturdy Nordics work at all? And since they don't, how have they succeeded in acquiring the reputation of being strenuous and indefatigable workers? These were the first questions which puzzled me after spending a few hours in Oslo. In the summer, all offices close at 3 p.m. and shops not much later. In Italy they keep the shops open till the late hours of the night and should you urgently need a tomato or a guitar in Naples or Rome at twenty minutes before midnight, you will have no difficulty in buying either. Yet the Italians have the reputation of being lazy and the Norwegians of being industrious. These vague generalisations, however, are true and just—as vague generalisations almost always are. The Italians often enough are just too lazy to close their shops, thus giving a false impression of keeping them open. But the Norwegians, as long as they are supposed to be working, do in fact work. The Norwegian has his breakfast—a lot of fish, soda water, milk and coffee—and goes to his office. He takes no time off for lunch. If you drop into an office around 12 noon, you may find a clerk or a minister of state sitting at his desk, munching a sandwich with one hand, writing something with the other and talking on the telephone at the same time. Till 3 p.m. they do work, but they never rush; they try to do their best, but whatever cannot be done today will have to wait till tomorrow. They carry on their hard and conscientious work in such a vague and leisurely fashion that a Norwegian office always gives you the impression of a holiday camp. An American friend—driven to despair by this Norwegian version of hard labour—exclaimed bitterly: "These Norwegians either fish or make love; and in the summer they don't fish."

The war has made a deeper impact on some other nations, but its effects are nowhere more alive than in the four Scandinavian states. (Four because, in addition to Norway and Sweden, Denmark is always counted as a real, and Finland as an honorary Scandinavian country.) The Germans do not remember the war at all and Nazism is less than a fading memory. According to them, all the trouble started with the Allies bringing the Russians to the Elbe. Prior to that there was the bombing of Germany and prior to *that* nothing happened worth mentioning. The English seem to remember Cromwell and the Wars of the Roses much more distinctly than Hitler. The Americans look ahead while the French are looking back to World War I. But, in Scandinavia, World War II is remembered. It is a decisive and character-forming influence—and the new traits formed or brought to the surface by the war are superimposed on the basic characteristics of the various Scandinavian peoples.

Sweden succeeded in remaining neutral and Sweden has a guilt complex. She tried to buy her peace with Germany for concessions and is now trying to buy her peace with herself for cash, and explanations. No explanation is needed; but it is forthcoming with alarming and alarmed eagerness. It was Norway—a country which had seen no hostilities since Napoleon—which became the hero of Scandinavia. The King of Norway, with his government, escaped to London; the Norwegians fought bravely in the underground and on the various battlefields. The whole world admires them for this; but no one more ardently than they admire themselves. Norwegian heroism meant immense sacrifice, loss of blood, and tremendous sufferings. Yet, they wouldn't give a second thought to all this. What should be more natural than that they have done their duty? But Norway's heroism also pierced—almost fatally—the superiority complex of the Swedes. The Swedes were well fed on thick steaks while the Norwegians suffered in

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concentration camps. When you sense the atmosphere of Scandinavia, you cannot help realising that today this is regarded as the good luck of Norway and the misfortune of Sweden.

I HAVE never seen people who are so fond of disparaging themselves as the Norwegians. This healthy dislike of each other is symptomatic of a deep inner harmony. Every human being and every nation is in need of discharging a certain amount of hatred—just as a motor has to discharge a certain amount of fumes—and those who discharge these psychological fumes on the home market, can adjust themselves more easily to communal life at large. Besides, it is much simpler and more natural to dislike your neighbour than any distant enemy or adversary. So the Norwegians dislike one another as individuals and the Swedes as a nation —and they are happy. They are not too talkative, as a rule, but as soon as they have a chance of speaking ill of themselves, their eyes light up and you just cannot stop them. As soon as people heard the nature of my errand, they implored me to write something bad about them. "We are sick and tired," they said, "of hearing what fine fellows we are"—adding almost beseechingly: "And we are not, you know. . . ."

They hate, first of all, one another's physical proximity. It is not uninteresting to observe how different people react to—let us say—an overcrowded bus. The French enjoy the warmth of the human body; the English are quite prepared to sit unconcernedly on each other's shoulders as if unaware of anything irregular; the Americans struggle for space and *Lebensraum* in a bus, but once their space is secured, they are ready to view their battling fellows with benevolent and amused interest. But the Norwegians are downright hostile. They like individualism but dislike individuals. They draw away from each other and remember, subconsciously, the wide and limitless open spaces to which for centuries they were accustomed. They were—and still are—a nation of fishermen and farmers; and independent fishermen and farmers at that. They were used to cultivating not only their own land but their own hills and mountains. In a country where there was too much space and too few people, everything belonged to them as far as the eye could see. They are no real city-dwellers. It is estimated that 75 per cent of Oslo's population consists of second or third generation farmers. The Norwegians build cities because cities are painful and unavoidable necessities in modern life; but their hearts belong to the sea and the forests. Thousands of people possess little islands in Oslo Fjord or on the West Coast, or retreat to little huts in the depths of wild and practically unapproachable forests or valleys where they try to escape back to a primitive but healthy life. It is when they are far away from a modern lavatory that they are really happy. I met scores of people who dream of getting ruined: then they can get away to their island or their forest hut, feed on fish they catch themselves or on birds they shoot, cut wood, and cook on their own wood fire and be miles and miles away from chain stores, trams, and telephones. Others, in good jobs, save up all the year to be able to get away in the summer and spend a few weeks in utter discomfort.

They are provincial. But their provinciality is not the dreary provinciality of small towns; it is the proud and sovereign provinciality of the peasants. They do not pretend that their small towns are large cities or that Oslo is a rival of London. They do not dream of big cities; they dream of no cities. They feel happiest on top of a snow-covered mountain peak where they can see only a hut, an occasional reindeer, a few terrifying cliffs and one or two odd Coca-Cola advertisements.

THIS instinctively reluctant attitude to urban civilisation often prompts them to overcompensate. Every now and then a mania for monumentality breaks out in the Norwegians. They have built a City Hall in Oslo which cost a fortune and is the largest in Scandinavia. It is also the ugliest. The inside is impressive and is decorated by some good, modern paintings which recall the horrors of Nazi occupation and the joy of liberation; but, from the outside, the building looks like a monumental piece of cheese, rather awkwardly cut. Obviously, it was the size that mattered. Or take, for example, the Vigeland collection in Oslo's Frogner Park. Vigeland was Norway's greatest sculptor but not better than a third-rate Rodin. His career was rather the opposite of the usual. He was hailed, accepted and revered in the early stages of his career and became a controversial figure after his death. Oslo decided to honour

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him and Vigeland was honoured in a way no artist had ever been before or has been since. He himself was asked to plan a huge park, a worthy home for several hundred of his statues and sculptures. Vigeland has one theme only: the beauty and joy of healthy and uninhibited sexual love. Even motherhood seems to be only an accidental result of sexual life—a conception which may not be utterly untrue but, having examined the first three hundred of his works, you feel that the subject grows slightly monotonous. Gustav Vigeland led a lonely and secluded life and died during the German occupation in 1943, at the age of seventy-four. He left behind him the vastest public monument ever created for any living artist inside or outside Norway, some sky-scraping phallic symbols, and a raging controversy about his own artistic rank and value.

It follows from the Norwegians' provincial, peasant outlook that they mistrust success. Few Norwegians have ever been really popular in their own country. Nansen, Amundsen, Michelsen, the King, a few other members of the royal family—and that's about all. They do not like Trygve Lie, for instance. The former secretary of the United Nations returned from the great world and—they feel—speaks to them from a certain height. He lives in Flaskebekk, near Oslo, in the Fjord, and has a flat in town as well as a mountain cabin in the Røros district. He has no say at the moment in Norwegian politics or in the Norwegian Socialist Party and no one knows his future plans: does he want to play a part in national or only in international politics? He works on his memoirs, plays tennis at a friend's house in Flaskebekk, goes to Oslo practically every day, turns up frequently in the restaurant of the Storting—the Parliament—and talks to people with great gusto and listens to them with interest. But he comes from the great world, he refers to Eden as Tony and to Acheson as Dean—and that is unforgivable.

A charming and nonchalant informality sets the tone of social and even business life. In this they are in the sharpest contrast with the Swedes, who are more formal and pedantic than the Germans. In Norway they do not try to keep up with the Joneses. They do not mind whether they have a good address or a bad one or whether they live in a style corresponding to their social status. They used to be poor and do not mind at all being poor. They are fully aware of the immense and unshakeable security poverty gives you. The poor man—one who is content to remain poor—is safe. He has no worries. If a rich man loses his riches, it's a tragedy; if a poor man loses his poverty he is not inconsolable.

A letter may or may not be answered, and one does not feel embarrassed for not having replied. If you make an appointment, your friend may be anything up to two hours late and will probably mutter a few words of vague apology, but it is as likely as not that he will not even be aware of being late. You do not write formal letters for appointments, you just ring up and the person you wish to meet, be he the Commander-in-Chief or the Foreign Minister, will probably tell you to come along straight away or at any time between 9.30 and 3. In the worst case he will merely have forgotten all about you and will not be in his office. After breakfast I often walked over to the Storting, next door to my hotel, and sat in the restaurant or listened to the debates. No one ever stopped me to ask for a ticket and no one ever enquired who I was or where I came from.

NORWAY is the largest small country in the world. She is considerably larger in territory than the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. I have five reference books in front of me giving five different figures concerning the size of Norway, which is, however, about 125,000 square miles. The area of the United Kingdom is 94,279 square miles. The United Kingdom has about fifty and a half million inhabitants while Norway, according to the latest (1950) census, has a population of 3,277,211. That means an average density of 10·2 persons per square mile, the lowest in Europe, with the single exception of Iceland. More than a quarter of Norway's territory is north of the polar circle. Only 4 per cent of her land is cultivated, 24 per cent is covered with forests, and 72 per cent consists of rocks, waste land, and glaciers. Her innumerable lakes cover 14,000 square miles—i.e. more than the entire cultivated land of the country. As regards hydro energy, both tapped and untapped, Norway is one of the richest countries in the world. This means, according to many scientists, that in due course she will be one of the most important countries in the world. Once coal, oil, and uranium have been used up,

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countries with vast supplies of hydro energy will gain preponderance. It may be only a matter of a few hundred years. Just wait and see.

It is remarkable to see that the Norwegians really look Nordic, with the exception of the picturesque and arctic Laplanders (there are about 20,000 of them). On the whole the Norwegians are not very tall, but according to army statistics 64 per cent of the new recruits have blue eyes and only 7 per cent brown. The army is silent about the colour of the eyes of the remaining 29 per cent, but I should guess they are green. Norway's population is also one of the most homogeneous in the world. Almost 97 per cent follow the Lutheran State religion. Among the few foreigners in the country, are a few thousand other Scandinavians and 1,280 Poles. Before the war, Norway received a comparatively large number of German–Jewish refugees, too, but most of them were exterminated by the Nazis during the occupation. There are 1,218 German citizens left. Not counting the Scandinavians, Poles, and Germans there are altogether 4,796 foreigners in Norway, among them 15 Hungarians, 1 Bulgarian, 1 Egyptian, 1 Israeli, and 4 Chinese.

In Norway it is either never dark or it is always dark. In the summer, the night lasts less than two hours and even at its darkest, is not darker than our twilight. At the North Cape the sun never sets from the second week of May till the last week of July and never rises between November 18th and January 23rd. North of the Arctic Circle you can see the Midnight Sun, which means that you can see the sun rise at about 1 a.m. It is a lovely sight and tourists flock to admire it. But—impressive as it is—the spectacle does not differ greatly from the sunrise at 5 o'clock, visible in a large number of other lands. In fact, I gather, it is the same sun.

In the winter, on the other hand, it is dark at 3 in the afternoon and is not light again till 10 or 10.30 a.m. These endless winter evenings have turned the Norwegians into inveterate readers. It is an old boast of Scandinavia that there are no illiterates and a new boast that there is no television there. But there is a vast difference between people who can read and people who do read. Norway has the largest book circulation per capita in the world. The average circulation of a novel is 4–5,000 copies, but a circulation of 50,000 is not too infrequent. Heyerdahl's *Kon-Tiki* book sold 100,000 copies and Churchill's *War Memoirs* 226,000 sets—£8 per set. *Aftenposten*, Norway's largest newspaper, has a daily circulation of 135,000. Proportionately, Churchill's *Memoirs* should have sold almost 4,000,000 copies in this country and an average novel should sell 70,000 copies.

A very large number of the Norwegians are secret dramatists or poets. During the endless hours of darkness they write; and that's why they read, too. And this is, in turn, the basic explanation for the fact that a country with a population slightly larger than that of Tibet and smaller than that of Guatemala, has produced such giants as Ibsen, Bjørnson, Sigrid Undset, Knut Hamsun, Jonas Lie, Alexander Kielland, and Edvard Grieg.

WHAT is the structure of Norwegian society? Norway is a democratic and constitutional monarchy. War almost broke out between Sweden and Norway in 1905 when the Norwegians decided to end their country's union with Sweden. It was by one of the few victories of common sense in history that war was avoided and a peaceful separation negotiated. A referendum decided that independent Norway should remain a kingdom. Then a second referendum was held on the question whether the Norwegians wished to invite Prince Carl of Denmark to be their king. Had the answer been "no," many people were ready to suggest Bjørnson for the throne—partly because he looked like a king. I wonder whether this choice would have been advantageous for Norway or for Bjørnson; a poet made king, however, would have created a pleasant impression in literary circles. Anyway, the vote was overwhelmingly in favour of the Danish prince who, under the name of King Haakon VII, entered Oslo (then Christiania) in November, 1905—525 years after the death of the last Norwegian king, Haakon VI. Haakon VII, at the age of eighty-two, is still Norway's reigning monarch. He was always popular, but his courage and determination during the war raised his popularity to legendary heights.

Crown Prince Olav is fifty. He is a superb yachtsman. Apart from the most formal state occasions, he does not allow anyone to call him "Your Royal Highness" and usually

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addresses men in the Norwegian equivalent of *du* or *tu*. This rather embarrasses people because they feel that, after all, they cannot call him "Olav" and talk to him in the second person singular. As a result, a most awkward kind of conversation follows in which every kind of address is carefully and painfully avoided by one party. The Crown Prince and Princess go to the cinema and buy their own tickets; their children go to ordinary schools with other children. One American journalist had two appointments with the Crown Prince and let him down on both occasions, without even excusing himself on the telephone. Finally, he turned up at the Prince's yachting cottage at Hanko without an appointment. He was received, but during the interview the Crown Prince was doing the washing-up.

Olav's son, Harald, Prince of Norway (now 17) is reliably reported to have borrowed 50 øre (about sixpence) from certain of his grandfather's loyal subjects, well known to him. When asked what he needed the money for, he said: "Ice cream." When further interrogated whether he could not obtain the sum required from his father, he replied: "No." Once, at school, Prince Harald annoyed a little boy who shouted at Harald: "I'm going to give you a hiding, even if you are the Crown Prince." Harald explained that he was not a Crown Prince, only Prince of Norway, but this important constitutional distinction did not save him.

THE royal family, as I have already said, is immensely and justly popular but their influence is moderate. Which is then the ruling class of Norway? The Socialists are in majority and it is safe to say that the working class is the strongest layer in Norwegian society—the working class which does not exist. The Norwegians have succeeded in raising the working class to a middle-class level, thus achieving the most sensible aim of the proletariat: its own liquidation *as* proletariat. The workers make as much money as clerks and small merchants; and what is more important they spend their money in the usual middle-class manner. They often acquire property: houses and motor boats. Servility is unknown. You order something in a restaurant and the waiter may reply: "That's no good. I'll bring you a pork chop instead." Don't argue with him. It would be quite useless.

The workers assert their rights and their party rules the country. Regulations are manifold, taxation is heavy, and poor millionaires keep complaining. There is no aristocracy and no influential gentry class, but a few great fortunes have been amassed: ship-owners are rich (Norway has the third largest merchant fleet in the world) and there are forestry-millions, fishing- and whaling-millions, but few large industrialists. Now that the Crown Prince's daughter, Princess Ragnhild, has married a commoner—who is also a millionaire ship-owner—some people have the suspicion that a new ruling class may emerge from the combination of wealth and royal prestige. On the other side of the scales there is another kind of new aristocracy: the aristocracy of sufferers. People like to point out, not without a certain pride, the prisons in which they spent some time during the German occupation. These new aristocrats are not arrogant, they do not assert any real or imaginary rights and they are not organised. But their prestige is high, although it is bound to decline with the passage of time, while the influence of millionaires will last as long as their millions last.

Who are then the underdogs in Norway—in a country where neither the workers nor the rich are oppressed? Every society needs its underdogs and as Norway had none she had to create some—at least on a temporary basis. The former Nazis—quislings—were eminently suitable and consequently chosen for this role. Of course, they deserved it and, in a way, Norway was generous with them. It is estimated that 75 per cent of the former Nazis are back at work. Those who are not, can live somehow and need not starve. But there is some discrimination against former Nazis and even their children are ostracised in a cool, Norwegian manner "unless"—as someone put it—"they are really first-class skiers."

In the political field Norway finds herself sadly deprived of all acute and burning problems. The Storting is one of the few parliaments of the world which became calmer and more sedate after the war. Indeed, their sessions are strangely quiet because no interruptions are allowed; there is no booing and no applause. In the Danish parliament members give a 5 øre piece to the orator whose performance has pleased them—but even this expression of approval is unknown in Norway.

In foreign politics they have no problems,

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either. The country has joined NATO but refuses to give the Americans bases in peace time. There is an undercurrent of what they call Taftism and Bevanism in the Socialist Party—in other words, some wish to return to a splendid Nordic isolation, leaving Europe as well as America to their fate. Others, mostly military people, want to grant bases to the Americans. But these problems are not acute and no change in foreign policy is likely.

Norway has no American problem in the Western European sense of the word because there are few Americans in the country. She has no German problem either. The Norwegians dislike Germans and wish that the Germans would buy more fish in general and more dried fish in particular, though dried fish can generally be sold to Catholic countries. They have no Russian or Communist problem either. The Communists are not very strong and although Norway has a common frontier 122 miles long with the Soviet Union, Russia seems to be much further away from Oslo than it is from New York. The Russian frontier is in the extreme north and not important either economically or strategically. Every now and then, a Norwegian cow strays over to Soviet territory and is arrested. Then the Russian frontier guards put up a flag intimating their desire to hold a meeting. Negotiations are then started, minutes typed out in triplicate, and eventually the cow—unless she confesses to being an imperialist spy—is returned to her owner.

HAVING no real problems, the Norwegians are desperately trying to create some. They are not very good at this task and seem unable to generate any strong feelings in the matter. The first great problem they have succeeded in improvising is the language question. Norway has two languages, the urban Riksmaal and the rustic—or at least lower class—neo-Norwegian. Everybody understands both languages—so there is no real problem. But they refuse to accept this fact and, one feels, it would be cruel to deprive a poor nation of fishermen and sailors of their last little problem. As they maintain that Norway has, in fact, two languages, the solution seemed to be self-evident: they have decided to create a third one, to be called Samnorsk. Writers have taken up arms over the language problem and the Authors' Society has split into a Riksmaal and a neo-Norwegian group. But most people are able to regard the struggle with their emotions well under control. A Norwegian publisher explained to me that the struggle was futile. He himself simply speaks Riksmaal in Oslo and neo-Norwegian in the country. Did it matter—he asked—whether he said "boken" or "boka" for *book*? Then he grew serious. But, he added, he would never say "boka" for the Bible. For any other book, yes; for the Bible, no. He would rather die. Last year, a learned committee was appointed by the Storting to unify the language and produce an official and compulsory version of Samnorsk, the third language. The full committee meets once a year; sub-committees of six members, once a month. Members of the committee told me that their work might be finished roughly in a hundred years, if they pull themselves together and hurry up. So this problem is being solved, too, in true Norwegian spirit and at true Norwegian speed.

The other acute problem Norway will have to decide and decide pretty soon, is whether hell exists or not. The Bishop of Hamar, Bishop Schjelderup, has declared that hell does not exist in the physical sense, that there is no eternal punishment and that people are not actually roasting for eternity. This statement created a furore in some religious circles, particularly in the Menighets Fakultetet, an important theological college, under the spiritual leadership of the retired Dr. Hallesby. This group insists on the existence of a real, hot hell. As the Lutheran religion is the state religion in Norway, the dispute was referred to the government. The government was to decide: (1) whether there is a hell or not, and (2) if there is, what kind of hell it is. The government tried to wash their hands of hell, declared that they were not concerned with theological questions and referred the problem to the Council of Bishops.

Discussions, arguments, and committee meetings went on for almost a year. At last, the bishops of Norway and the two Theological Faculties produced a statement and this was published by the Ministry of Church Affairs in February, 1954. The Ministry observes that "the pronouncements by the Bishops do not express any united viewpoint and tend to lead to divergent conclusions." The statement goes on: "Nor can it be said that theological-dogmatical research in this field gives any unequivocal or

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binding guidance. It is difficult to deny that theological science does not seem to have reached conformity of opinion with regard to the Scripture's testimony about the nature of perdition." Now, at last, we know.

BEFORE leaving Oslo, I visited one of Norway's celebrities: Thor Heyerdahl, the organiser of the Kon-Tiki expedition. In Oslo he lives in a villa on the outskirts of the city but his permanent home is a log-cabin in the Sylene area, in the wild forests near the Swedish border. He loves it, as it is far away from civilisation, although he likes big cities too. Heyerdahl is forty—but a very young forty—thin, of medium height, with light hair and complexion.

The Kon-Tiki expedition had almost to be called off because of lack of funds. No American publisher wanted to risk $600, the sum Heyerdahl needed. It was his Norwegian publisher, Mr. Harald Grieg—a great-nephew of Edvard Grieg—who advanced him the money in the end. He knew Heyerdahl well—because he had published a little known but quite successful book by him before the war. "Heyerdahl is the kind of man," Mr. Grieg said to me, "who, whenever a historical, anthropological or archæological fact is in doubt, goes to the spot and finds out for himself." In 1937 he wanted to find out whether civilised people could live the lives of savages. He travelled to a small island east of Tahiti and spent there a year with his first wife. His book, *One Year in Paradise*, was published in 1938. Heyerdahl left behind all products of civilisation, including even matches; he did not shave; he lived on fish caught in the sea and went out to hunt with an axe. He was disappointed in the end, because he found the savages much more civilised than himself. Ultimately he was driven to the conclusion that "it is no use to buy a ticket to Paradise."

Mr. Grieg's 4,000 Norwegian crowns were —as he said—the best investment of his life. The book sold 100,000 copies in Norway, 225,000 copies in Sweden and over a million (not counting the cheap editions) in the United States. It was translated into twenty-eight languages.

Since the Kon-Tiki expedition, Heyerdahl has made another journey. Accompanied by an American and a Norwegian archæologist—Dr. Eric K. Reed and Arne Skjølsvold—he travelled to the Galapagos Islands, 600 miles off the nearest mainland, South America, to look for traces of early man. Since Darwin's expedition, science had claimed that no human beings had inhabited these islands before the 16th century. Heyerdahl doubted this claim, so he went to find out for himself. He succeeded in discovering traces of prehistoric settlements on three islands. He found quantities of prehistoric pottery—some of them not only pre-Spanish but pre-Inca. He thinks the evidence discovered is conclusive. His theory is that the Indians knew of the existence of the Galapagos Islands but were disinclined to settle there because of the scarcity of the water supply.

Heyerdahl lived to see the Kon-Tiki raft—which had travelled 5,000 miles from Peru to Polynesia—transformed into a museum. He no longer cares for it. "It's a glorious wreck now," he says. "It was quite a different sight to see it bounce on the waves of the ocean." What are Heyerdahl's final conclusions? They are not only typical of the man but of his nation, too. "I lost much of my confidence in civilisation," he said, "but there is no way back. Civilised man cannot return to nature. We must resign ourselves to this fact. But let us be alert and remember that not all change is progress. And even real advance does not necessarily mean more happiness. We—I mean humanity—haven't improved a great deal." "Since when?" I asked. "Since prehistoric times," he answered. "We haven't really improved at all."

Before I said goodbye to him, I asked him to ring for a taxi. He could not get through so he asked his wife to drive me down to the nearest taxi-rank.

"I should like to take you down myself," he said, "but I cannot drive."

George Mikes

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Comment

THE BROKEN DIALOGUE

RECENTLY, I was present at an interesting, and in some ways archetypal, Anglo-American conversation. It was between an American visitor to London, an educationist, and his host, an English critic. Both men were cultured, intelligent, and vaguely liberal in political outlook; the discussion went along amiably—until the Critic remarked casually how disgusting was the latest example of American witch-hunting: the labelling of the former Assistant-Secretary to the U.S.A. Treasury, Harry Dexter White, as a Communist agent, the way even ex-President Truman had been dragged in, and all the rest of it. Having said this, however, the Critic was taken aback to find that his American visitor believed fully in the charges against White, though he disliked the manner of the Republican attack against Mr. Truman. Of a sudden, the transatlantic dialogue broke down.

In the course of further conversation, the following came out:

(1) Though the Critic had followed in his daily newspaper the controversy over Harry Dexter White, he was quite unaware that President Truman had *not* defended White's loyalty but had instead claimed that he had moved to "get rid of the fellow" as soon as he learned that White was passing information to Soviet agents.

(2) Somewhat startled by his misreading, the Critic accepted the correction, but replied that since Senator McCarthy and his associates threw out so many obviously wild charges of Communism in all directions, one was disinclined to accept any of them. To which the American replied that the accusation had been put forward in this case not by McCarthy but by Mr. Brownell, President Eisenhower's Attorney-General.

(3) He seemed to have his facts mixed up, said the Critic; but, to be frank, it made little difference to his general attitude. What *was* an ugly fact was that people were being hounded in the United States: there was a witch-hunt, which he detested so much that he was most reluctant to believe any accusation of Communism made by any American politician. To this the American was sympathetic, but he was also perturbed by his host's evident lack of interest in whether or not Harry Dexter White had been a Soviet espionage agent—a disinterest that the latter freely admitted, though he could not, under questioning, explain it.

In confessing to this lack of interest, the Critic was doubtless only giving expression to the general British feeling on this subject. Yet, objectively looked at, isn't such a disinterest very odd? For, after all, Harry Dexter White was by all accounts a Very Important Person. An able man, aggressive and energetic, he was the key figure at the US Treasury for five years, from 1941 to 1946. As Assistant-Secretary to that dignified gentleman-farmer, Mr. Henry Morgenthau, he had more than an ordinary share in important policy decisions. He drafted the so-called Morgenthau Plan, and was in fact the man in charge of US foreign economic policies. (It is interesting—though perhaps not relevant—that he was regarded as anti-British; and though he favoured the idea of large-scale American aid to Russia, he was distinctly cool to the prospect of providing dollars to Britain.) During the war and post-war international monetary negotiations, he was the American counterpart to Lord Keynes, though with longer tenure and therefore even greater influence, and if one should suddenly learn in London that Lord Keynes had. . . . The very idea is unthinkable. But no one could say it was uninteresting.

It is, therefore, surely no cause for surprise if the revelations about White's pro-Soviet activities evoked a political furore in the United States. Even if one takes the extreme

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sceptic's view that the case against White is not *absolutely* proven—in the sense that it was never put to a legal test—even so, the whole White case must rank as a *cause célèbre*. Yet Mr. Brownell's charges were reported in the British and European press under headlines expressing only scorn, distaste, and, above all, disbelief. "The Wildest Witch-hunt" was the headline of the *Daily Herald*, which seemed to sum up the British reaction.

WHY this incredulity? One important general reason is probably the continued spell in Britain of the *mystique* of Roosevelt and the New Deal. Most of those American politicians who have led the shouting about "Reds in Government" are reactionary isolationists who in the past proclaimed that F. D. R. was a tool in the hands of "British Imperialism." Naturally, no section of British opinion will take either these people or their views seriously. Parallel with this go recollections of the Soviet wartime *mystique*; and here, often, a slippery argument is insinuated. Even if certain US officials passed secret documents to Soviet agents, the argument runs, they did so not to an enemy but to a wartime ally, the suggestion being that this was at worst an act of misplaced idealism. Of course, few of those putting forward this argument would uphold it in a case of British senior officials passing secret state information to Soviet agents; and, in any case, the evidence against White goes back several years before the outbreak of the last war.

More interesting, however, are the positive and specific reasons why Mr. Brownell's speech ran up against such a wall of hostility in Britain.

There was first of all the fundamental objection to the manner of his accusation, an objection voiced even by those who knew that during the last two Roosevelt administrations a number of secret Communist agents had penetrated into high government circles, and that Mr. Truman had—as a good party man—tried to cover up the scandal. Mr. Brownell later disclaimed any intent of impugning Mr. Truman's loyalty, yet he must surely have foreseen that his ambiguous words—that Mr. White had been promoted "by the very people" who knew him to be a Soviet agent—would act as a spur to Mr. Truman's more reckless and unprincipled opponents. Internationally, the effect of his speech was to throw discredit on the office of the Presidency itself. That Mr. Brownell should have risked this for Republican Party advantage seemed to British observers to argue a dangerous lack of political maturity.

Furthermore, Mr. Brownell's accusation took the White affair out of its context. The Republicans might be loath to remember it, but in Britain one recalls clearly that it was during President Truman's term of office, and often under his direct personal leadership, that the policy of containing Communism was initiated and the Western alliance built up. Any possible error of judgement, or opportunism of politics, in the White case should have been set against this major accomplishment; but this is just what Mr. Brownell and his supporters appeared to refuse to do.

A third reason for British partisanship springs from Mr. Truman's personal popularity in Britain. From the moment when he took over the awesome Roosevelt heritage, apparently quite untrained for the task, Mr. Truman had British sympathy. Almost at once he put himself over as that most popular British figure, the small man making good against odds, in this case with what seemed an American equivalent of cockney courage. More than that, in the indefinable way in which such things happen, the British man-in-the-street formed an impression that Mr. Truman, with all his limitations, could at decisive moments be relied upon to act out of good human instincts. That impression still remains, nor is it ever likely to be shaken.

British disbelief was also influenced by strong feelings against what is called "McCarthyism." On this sorry subject only one relevant point need here be made. From a British viewpoint there is nothing astonishing in the fact that numbers of American intellectuals, like those of other Western countries, should at various times have felt attracted by the Communist Party. Such people, one knew, fell into widely different categories. At one end of the scale you had fervent and active Communists; at the other end you had the innocents abroad in politics. In between were some tens of thousands of fellow-travellers, vague "Leftists," people whose sense of outrage at Hitler and Mussolini led them to Communist "front" organisations, American readers of the *New Statesman*, idealists, and what have you.

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Together they formed an unstable minority group, swayed this way and that by such events as the Spanish Civil War, the Stalin-Hitler Pact, or the victories of the Red Army. No doubt this pro-Communist minority had its nuisance value in American life and politics. But what appals almost all people in Britain is that Senator McCarthy and his associates should have been able to magnify this nuisance value into something like mortal danger to the Republic, and seem to have persuaded large numbers of ordinary Americans to this same disturbed view.

HERE one touches on the radical differences in political climate on the two sides of the Atlantic. Not long ago Sir Hartley Shawcross, formerly Attorney-General under the last Labour Government, pointed out to an American audience that, in Britain, Communist infiltration into government service had also been revealed. Like Mr. Truman, Mr. Attlee had ordered counter-measures. Seventeen thousand out of a million British civil servants were investigated on security grounds, and as a result some hundreds were suspended and a number of others, not wholly cleared, were moved to non-secret positions. But the whole thing was done quietly, with tacit party agreement instead of strife.

Why should there have been this striking difference in British and American reactions to the same danger? Among many contributory explanations I should like to emphasise one. Sir Hartley gave out his figures in the course of a speech at the Bicentenary Celebrations of Columbia University. He had followed a number of eminent Americans in a symposium on the theme of "Man's right to knowledge and the free use thereof"—i.e. on what seems to many Americans the burning question of how to combine freedom with security. It is surely significant that a similar symposium in this country would not receive much attention. Apart from some scientists working on secret projects, few British citizens are worried over the state of freedom in their country. As for security, the old, utterly confident sense of living on a safe island fortress has long been lost in Britain. In this respect, the Americans and British of today appear as if living in different periods of history. No wonder conversation is difficult.

An analogy might clarify what I have in mind. If a contemporary Englishman could be whisked back to the England of 1914–18, he would probably find much to startle him on that earlier Home Front—the cold hate for the enemy (the Hun), passionate faith in the justice of Britain's cause, angry intolerance towards socialists, pacifists, and other dissenters. If he were perspicacious, he would recognise the cause of these fierce emotions in the shock the nation suffered when a century of English security crumbled in August, 1914.

Though the American mood of today is not precisely like that of England of 1914, resemblances are there. In America, too, a longstanding sense of national security has been shattered. This occurred not at the time of Pearl Harbour, which was a piece of carelessness and therefore simply to be avoided in the future. No, paradoxically, the American sense of security vanished with the first day of peace, that is, with the inaugural of the new atomic-bomb age, and with the Soviet Union looming up as a powerful opponent. To the shock of this abrupt loss of their sense of security most Americans have been painfully trying to adjust themselves ever since 1945. Emotionally it has not been easy. The English in 1914 could react to the shock by "legitimate" hate of the wartime enemy, whereas, apart from Korea, the Americans have since 1945 been officially at peace and therefore emotionally frustrated.

I think this situation explains a good deal of what has been going on in the United States—the tendency to see politics in terms of black and white, and, above all, the insistent search for new national security, for a world, indeed, made safe for democracy. Contrast this with contemporary European weariness, and scepticism of any such achievement, and one stares at the yawning gap in historic time, intensifying all attendant misunderstandings: British inability to understand why Americans should think it important what the political views of a feather-brained television singer were fifteen years back, and American inability to understand why the British press should consider it unimportant that a senior member of the American administration, able to influence the politics of the free world, should turn out to have been a Stalinist agent. And there are as yet no signs that the gap will be rapidly closed.

T. R. Fyvel

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A LESSON FOR THE THIRD PROGRAMME?

SOME recent visits to Germany have emphasised to me the differences between the German radio stations and the BBC in their treatment of modern music. Of course, there are many similarities between musical conditions in Germany and England: there, as here, the bulk of the concert-going public will not venture far beyond the established classical and romantic composers—though the Germans prefer Brahms and Bruckner to Rachmaninoff and Sibelius; there, as here, an active minority is interested in contemporary music—and, in both countries, the only organisations with sufficient capital to support such activities are the radio stations. But the Germans, starved of modern music during the years of the Hitler régime, have reacted strongly in the opposite direction since 1945. Furthermore, those who are interested in contemporary music prefer the most radical tendencies—they will not put up with half-measures. The German radio stations—each of which is organised as a separate entity, serving its own region of the country—have not been slow to recognise and support this tendency, and there is even considerable artistic rivalry between the different stations as to which can best serve modern music.

Thus, for the last four years, the Bavarian Radio has devoted an hour every Monday evening to a concert of modern music, either chamber or orchestral, and in addition has sponsored a monthly series of public concerts in Munich in conjunction with the gifted composer, Karl Amadeus Hartmann, under the title of *Musica Viva*. In these concerts there appear the names both of the modern "classics"—Hindemith, Stravinsky, Bartók, Milhaud, Schoenberg, Berg, Webern—and of younger, more radical composers like Dallapiccola, Luigi Nono, Hans Werner Henze, Pierre Boulez, and Wolfgang Fortner. Similarly, the South-west Radio at Baden-Baden, as well as regularly playing a good deal of modern music in its programmes, organises a yearly festival of modern music at Donaueschingen, which includes a number of specially commissioned works by younger composers; its chief conductor, Hans Rosbaud, is a brilliant interpreter of contemporary works. The Cologne branch of the North-west German Radio recently organised a week's festival on much the same lines as that of Donaueschingen, but including in addition a demonstration and discussion of "*musique concrète*" and electronic music—a complete "*opéra-ballet concrète*" on the subject of Orpheus was actually performed at Donaueschingen this year, to the accompaniment of wild demonstrations. The Hessische Rundfunk, Frankfurt, organises an annual festival of contemporary music for which it commissions works by both German and foreign composers, devotes regular weekly broadcasts to combined programmes of contemporary music and literature, and also gives valuable support to the annual Darmstadt International Summer School. This last, which has now been held eight times since the war, attracts musicians and students from many different countries as well as from all parts of Germany itself. Composition classes have been given by Fortner, Křenek, René Leibowitz, Messiaen, and Varèse, among others; instrumental and singing teachers have included Yvonne Loriod, Pietro Scarpini, Peter Stadlen, André Gertler, Tibor Varga, and Ilona Steingruber. There is no dogma at Darmstadt; students of all countries are free to meet and discuss problems of modern music in a completely informal atmosphere, and in addition—a most valuable feature of the school—concerts have been given each year of works by young composers aged between twenty and thirty-five. The concerts give a most interesting picture of what the younger generation of composers in all countries are doing today. Dr. Wolfgang Steinecke, the far-sighted director of the school, must certainly be congratulated on building up an organisation which has achieved a unique position in the world of modern music; and its success would hardly have been possible without the help of the Frankfurt Radio, which makes recordings of the concerts for subsequent broadcasting.

THE North-west German Radio in Hamburg, like the Bavarian Radio, devotes a weekly broadcast to modern music, and also gives monthly public concerts under the title "Das neue Werk"; this series is now in its fourth year. Each of these concerts is designed as a whole, and brings out some particular

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artistic point—not necessarily a purely musical one; there have been, for instance, programmes of music connected with Kafka, Lorca, and Klee. The Kafka programme contained a talk on the author and readings from his works as well as an "Epitaph" by Boris Blacher and the first performance of Hans Werner Henze's specially commissioned radio opera, *The Country Doctor*.

Dr. Herbert Hübner, the able and enterprising director of "Das neue Werk," has emphasised that the purpose of these concerts is to relate music to the other arts and to show it in relation to the circumstances in which it was written, and to the age in which we live. This approach is shown even in such small matters as the programme-book provided for the audience; for instance, the programme of a concert devoted to the "Viennese circle" of Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern was illustrated by a reproduction of a painting by Franz Marc, who was closely associated with this circle before the First World War, and by some pithy comments of Marc's on artistic creation. Similarly, Lorca's *Quatre Visages* was reproduced on the cover of the Lorca concert (settings by young French and Italian composers of the *Lament for Ignacio Sanchez Mejias* and of the *Romance of the Spanish Gendarmerie*), and Klee's *Zwitschermaschine* was reproduced to illustrate a musical interpretation of it by the young German composer, Giselher Klebe.

It is hardly necessary to catalogue all the other interesting concerts given in this series; the one which I attended last October may serve as a microcosm of the series as a whole. The programme consisted of works from Greece, Mexico, and Italy, as well as the first performance of my own symphony. The Greek composer was Niko Skalkottas, who studied with Schoenberg in the 1920's in Berlin; he returned to Greece in 1933, on Schoenberg's enforced departure for America, and spent the remaining sixteen years of his life writing over 100 works, many of them on a large scale, and none of which was performed in his lifetime; meanwhile the composer was earning his living by playing second violin in the Athens Symphony Orchestra. Now at last interest is being shown in Skalkottas. His second Piano Concerto, performed at the Hamburg concert, is an attractive work with a strong feeling for colour and rhythm, and showing a very individual handling of the twelve-note method. The Mexican work was Carlos Chavez' Toccata for Percussion, an ingenious short piece in three linked movements which was successful within the inevitable limits imposed; the slow movement, with its bells and glockenspiel, certainly evoked a Mexican village atmosphere. The final work in the concert was the *Missa Africana* for chorus and orchestra, of the Italian composer Alberto Bruni-Tedeschi. The composer, while travelling in Equatorial Africa, heard natives at a mission in the Belgian Congo celebrating Mass with music based on their own African rhythms and percussion effects; this work is not exactly a pastiche of African music, but is a setting of the Latin text of the Mass in a primitive style with some use of effects borrowed from native music. It is a work of considerable interest and often great dramatic power. The programme was magnificently performed by the North-west German Radio Symphony Orchestra under Dr. Hermann Scherchen, the leading protagonist of contemporary music for the last forty years, and it was warmly applauded by a large audience, who gave the feeling that they were actively participating in this music of our time. This feeling, that modern music is not merely something to be tolerated as an unpleasant nuisance, is one that can be felt very strongly in Germany today.

ONE may ask: Why cannot the BBC do what the German radio stations do? The answer is that they used to; before the war the BBC gave regular broadcast concerts of contemporary music before an audience in a studio, and these even survived during the war under the title "Music of Our Time." In the early days of the Third Programme it was possible to hear interesting music of all ages, from the medieval period to the latest experimental work. But in the last few years a note of caution seems to have crept in; in fact most of the music now performed in the Third Programme could equally well go into the Home Service—which is, after all, a general programme designed for majority listening. Radical and experimental music may not command a large audience in this country; but many people would like to know what is going on, and societies which do perform music of this kind, like the Institute of Contemporary Arts and the Society for the Promotion of New Music, are compelled to

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struggle along on very limited budgets. The BBC has indeed helped both of these bodies; and it is true that, particularly in the last few months, they have broadcast a certain amount of "advanced" music from time to time; but I feel they could well go further by reviving their public concerts of contemporary music and also putting on a *regular* "workshop" programme in which the more experimental works could be performed, as the German radios are doing today with such conspicuous success.

Humphrey Searle

PARIS ON THE PSYCHOANALYST'S COUCH

CAN a great city be shown, like a patient, into the consulting-room of a psychoanalyst, placed upon a couch, and asked to let her subconscious speak? Frédéric Hoffet, a Protestant minister from Alsace who has been converted to psychoanalysis and who had already created a stir with his previous book *Psychoanalysis of Alsace*, has bent over Paris in his role of psychiatrist and has come up with a *Psychanalyse de Paris*, in which he so thoroughly analyses the spirit and magic of the city that nothing remains of her but an enormous scandal.

Diatribes against great cities have existed at least from Old Testament times (Babylon, the great whore), and, though the style may have altered from prophetic ardour to scientific pedantry, the content remains similar: the great city is a parasite on the country, a hothouse of decadence and of every perversion, the seat of spiritual disease and moral decomposition. In the course of centuries, much has been written about Paris—the favouritism of her salons, the capricious, centralised authority of her bureaucracy, the immorality of her intelligentsia. Even such an ardent admirer of Paris as Balzac sketches, in *The Girl with the Golden Eyes* and many other books, the vision of a city spectral and perverted, feverishly living and rapidly exhausted. Hoffet's tirade against Paris differs from its many predecessors by reason of its prosaic and humourless presumption. But why has it provoked the entire literary world of Paris into so violent a reaction? Why, from among the dozens of books about Paris which appear in Paris every month, has this one in particular created such a stir?

The provinces of France live for and by themselves and stand on firm foundations. But Paris, in part at least, lives by her "aura," by the image which the world has of her. Nowadays especially, Paris embodies, far more than does the French state, France's claim to be a world power. Paris remains—incomparably more than London, New York, Washington, or Moscow—the place which provides a measure for ideas and fashions. Throughout the fields of intellect and taste, Paris asserts her authority; whoever touches this, endangers the nation's prestige. And because today this authority is no longer so self-evident as it has been for three centuries, she has become more sensitive to attack.

THE collective Parisian with whom Hoffet is concerned is admittedly not representative of the millions of inhabitants of Paris and her environs, but only of the few hundred personalities who belong to the "inner circle" of *le tout Paris*, and who, it is alleged, hold in their hands every decision in politics, society, and literature, as successors to the Court of the past. But, explains Hoffet, in these circles charm and not merit, influence and not ability are decisive; and because all who wish to succeed are compelled to make themselves as pleasant and as popular as possible, since Paris is not an objective but an affective society, feminine, courtesan-like, and narcissistic traits develop at the expense of the really masculine qualities. Hence homosexuality becomes for him the true symbol, and the most important symptom, of the Parisian intelligentsia and so of Parisian decadence; at this point, of course, the names of Proust, Gide, Cocteau, and Genet must appear.

Every feminine group—including, therefore, Paris—loves to be subjugated by the masculine,

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conquering, imperious type. *Cherchez l'homme*: Hoffet does not need to look far, for he has already found him—it is the foreigner. Moreover, this former Protestant pastor has what in his terminology one would have to call a masochistic complex: he is particularly suspicious of Protestants. Even the Jews of Eastern Europe, he writes, are capable of being assimilated into Paris. But the Protestants, and especially Swiss Protestants, whose dominant influence in present-day Paris is Hoffet's particular discovery, not to say invention, remain foreign bodies, and, precisely because they are so completely different in kind—methodical, far-sighted, efficient, and masculine—they subjugate the native Parisian. However little Hoffet admires the feminine Parisian, he has even less love for the masculine conqueror who seizes power over Paris by virtue of being different. The two are complementary, the ruler and the ruled, in that they live a free life. The Parisian is freed from the ancient obligations, inhibitions, and taboos of life in the provinces, free from the pressure of that "super-ego" which sets bounds to the individual ego, taming its lusts and curbing its desires. But this very freedom, we are told, is a weakness, for it expresses itself in the irresponsibility of an infantile dream-world. In place of moral obligations and conventions, the individual is forced to seek refuge under the protection of a clique, a *chapelle*, in order to obtain a certain feeling of safety and security; and in this feeling, of course, the psychoanalyst at once recognises a yearning for the maternal womb. The same yearning drove the youth of Paris, after the war, into the cellars of the *Rive Gauche*, the famous *Caves* of St. Germain des Prés, which with their narrowness and darkness symbolise the flight downwards and the return to the Mother. (The fact that from 1940 onwards, during air-raid warnings, Parisians had become accustomed to sit about in cellars a good deal, and to chat and drink there, would naturally be far too simple an explanation to take in the deep-sea investigator of the psyche.) The Parisian, then, is by constitution not only a woman but also a child; and to his childishness belongs the dream-world of Parisian luxury—but also the much larger world of Parisian filth and misery: a world due to the indifference of dreamers, who can certainly transfigure reality or cast a spell over it, but cannot transform it in their everyday life.

It has been easy—perhaps too easy—to reject Hoffet's thesis. His own publisher, Bernard Grasset—who during the German Occupation idolised the conqueror in what Monsieur Hoffet would perhaps call a "feminine" way—amuses himself by taking Hoffet to task in a preface to the book. Hoffet's other critics in the Paris papers, too, have not found their task very difficult. But when one has read these critics, one really begins to wonder whether Frédéric Hoffet's prosaic and presumptuous book can really be dismissed so lightly, and whether this collection of half-truths might not contain some whole truths, too. Hoffet does not claim to describe the whole of Paris, and he knows that the majority of Parisians are just as solid, sober, and provincial as any group in the French provinces. He concentrates on that small circle in which for some years the Marquis de Sade has been fêted as a great thinker, and Jean Genet as a saint; and, although he confuses many issues—the intellectuals of the Left Bank, the salons, and politics—yet he has not invented the "cult of perversity" and more particularly the egocentricity of the Parisian intelligentsia.

Paris is not only an interpreter, at times unreliable, of France to the world and to herself; she has also been for centuries the centre and the melting-point of the modern world, the Rome of modern times; and the Parisian has long been accustomed to the idea of his world-wide significance and radiance. Yet once the real meaning of Paris, and the Parisian's view of that meaning, no longer coincide, there must arise a feeling of uneasiness about Parisian culture—a feeling of which the Parisian is only partly conscious in actual fact, but one which is an integral part of his present-day experience.

No big city accepts without a struggle the twilight of its greatness. Even Vienna lives still in the glow of its past. For Paris the situation is different, because, though she no longer stands at the centre of the world, no other city has been able to replace her in this position. Therefore the illusion of standing at the centre can be easily retained by the Parisian: the intellectual of Tokyo and of Rio de Janeiro, not to mention Rome and Copenhagen, still listens attentively to everything that comes from Paris, even when it is badly translated German metaphysics.

Formerly an idea was provincial until Paris

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had weighed and accepted it. Today, it is Paris that feels herself provincial if she fails to seize and advertise new thoughts and tendencies immediately. What was once a matter of course for Paris has now become a problematic task; and, in his clumsy way, Frédéric Hoffet has stumbled on this problem, which most Frenchmen step over elegantly without even noticing its existence. His treatment of the problem is not a loving one and, what is more serious (for there have been plenty of declarations of love for Paris), not a particularly intelligent one. But the Parisian is too close to his city to see her as a problem, and for this reason his unanimous and violent rejection of Hoffet's curious "psychoanalysis" leaves behind in its turn a sense of ambiguity.

François Bondy

Hilary Corke

In Tears

What, will you weep and your dear not be by
To wipe the tear and comfort when you cry?
It is a waste, it is a waste, say I.
Yet I will weep and say no reason why

What, will you silent keep, and he not know
The way the rivers of your sorrows go,
From what deep hills and towards what ports they flow?
No, I will weep and only answer No,
And be in tears

Then will you endless weep and without cease
Until the oceans ride their boundaries
And birds slide melting from the updrunken trees?
Oh no, time finds his end even for this,

And I could cage this foolish weeping quite
So soon as feathery flowers and grasses might
Grow in the dark where hair grew in the light,
And from the mouth I have lain against all night,
And was in tears

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KLEE'S "PEDAGOGICAL SKETCHBOOK"

SINCE the collapse of the artificial wartime boom in English Romantic painting, there has been a fluctuating but progressively increasing interest in the work of Paul Klee among many younger English artists, and in the growing circle which admires or discusses their work. This interest reached a local peak in the autumn of 1953, when the Institute of Contemporary Arts held an exhibition of Curt Valentin's collection of Klee drawings, and, at the same time, staged a symposium* on the *Pädagogisches Skizzenbuch*, of which Sybil Moholy-Nagy's translation† had been published in England earlier in the year, and had aroused much comment and discussion.

The symposium was a revealing affair, for it indicated the particular grounds on which the younger generation base their admiration of Klee, and the manner in which these differed from the grounds of an older generation of admirers. This difference was also shown in a subsequent ICA function,‡ in which it appeared that the younger artists can accept Paul Klee's later (that is, painterly and right-handed) work on a parity with his early, graphic, and left-handed art of the 1920's, while many of their elders cannot. Yet, in the symposium, it was the young who could accept the *Pedagogical Sketchbook*, even though it was published first in 1925 and is essentially a summation of his artistic experience of that period. This paradox may be no more than apparent, but it indicates divergent approaches to the work and thought of Klee.

THE historical position of the *Sketchbook* was defined by Lawrence Alloway as follows:

> The *Sketchbook* was part of the preliminary six-month course which included instruction in problems of form and experiments in the handling of different media. The students' aptitude for a particular craft showed itself in this period, and, at the same time, the student acquired a basic vocabulary of form. In addition, of course, it was essential to liberate students from conventional art habits. . . . This was not Klee's only activity at the Bauhaus, but it was his most fruitful.

The *Sketchbook* is therefore to be regarded as a form of basic primer of Bauhaus teaching, and it is, in fact, a grammar of the arts of design. It must therefore be seen against a background of the long tradition of such textbooks, running back through Serusier's *ABC de la Peinture*, indited for the Académie Ranson in the early nineteen-hundreds, through Charles Blanc's encyclopædic and influential *Grammaire des Arts de Dessin*, which had been serialised in the *Gazette des Beaux Arts* in the eighteen sixties, back to DuFresney, Lomazzo, Leonardo's lost codex, and ultimately to Alberti's *Della Pittura*.

But though it must be seen against this background, Klee's book cannot be assimilated to it, and this vital fact proved to be the knife-edge which divided the symposiasts. Though he appears to promise the kind of instruction which might be found in an academic textbook; though—like 19th century academic writers—he does not discuss subject-matter; though—like all works of the twenties—it contains a residue of academic æsthetics, the book remains irretrievably outside the academic tradition, the product of a personality for

* November 24th, 1953. Chairman, William Coldstream, Slade Professor of Fine Art, University of London. Speakers: Lawrence Alloway, London correspondent of *Art News* (New York), Lecturer at Tate Gallery; Victor Pasmore, painter, head of painting department, University of Durham; H. S. Williamson, Principal of Chelsea School of Art; Quentin Bell, lecturer in Art Education, University of Durham.

† *Pedagogical Sketchbook*. By PAUL KLEE. Faber. 15s.

‡ December 17th, 1953. Debate on the motion: That the late work of Paul Klee represents a decline in his powers.

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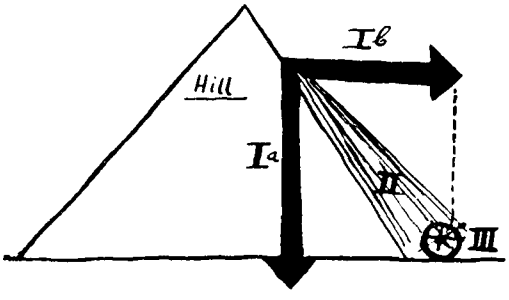
whom the creative process is not the production of a static rendered drawing of an ideal image, but the very act of marking the picture-surface with a hard point or soft brush. It is a work in the anti-academic line of descent of early impressionism, of analytical cubism, of futurism, of action-painting.

The teaching which Klee sets forth is therefore inherently dynamic, and animated by a keenly felt sense of the value and character of the draughtsman's creative gesture—thus the moving pencil point is regarded as the creator of line, the moving line as the creator of a plane, moving plane as creator of volume. These concepts appear in full strength in the first part of the book. The often quoted first proposition "an active line on a walk, moving freely without goal . . . the mobility agent is a point, shifting its position forward" introduces twelve other propositions in which Klee is at pains to expound his intuitive use of the categories; active, medial, passive. Alloway summarised the section thus:

> He applies categories of active, medial and passive to a range of phenomena, such as the relationship of muscle and bone, to the bloodstream, a waterfall, a plant. These categories are not fixed; for instance, the waterfall is active because it turns the waterwheel but medial because it moves as it does owing to the active forces of gravity and the obstructing mountain. By extension, the world can be defined as an endless series of manifold functions. Form, therefore, is the result of change and growth.

The Watermill



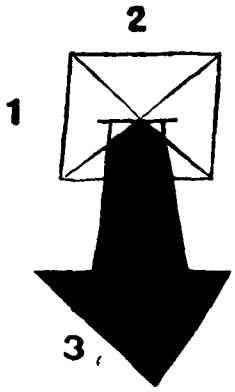
These first thirteen propositions are Klee's *pons asinorum*; unless the reader can at least believe he has understood them, the teaching of the rest of the book is lost by default. His language is difficult, a point to which we must return later, but less so if each proposition is taken closely with its illustration, and not considered in isolation.

Section II consists of a further thirteen propositions dealing with dimension, perspective, and balance—all more or less static concepts which were part of the legacy of academic theory to the æsthetics of the twenties. The manner of treatment is highly unacademic, however, and H. S. Williamson objected that

> the explanations of perspective are even more obscure than the usual ones, less complete and lacking any hint of the need at times to override Renaissance or "scientific" perspective,

so that we must conclude that Klee was not interested in these concepts for their own sakes, as an academic instructor should be, but more interested in indicating their use and possible subjective meaning.

The short third section, of only seven compact propositions, returns to the dynamic theme, and deals with motion in different media—air, earth, water, and astronomic space—in order to preface the highly poetic section IV, *Symbols of Form in Motion*, which elaborates a formal language to express the presence, nature, and consequences of motion. This becomes a sort of apotheosis of Klee's favourite expository symbol, the arrow. It had appeared with the aggressiveness of a gesture from a 3-D screen at the beginning of section II, and had animated many of the static diagrams



1. Dimension: left (right)
2. Dimension: top (bottom)
3. Dimension: front (back)

in that section with its terrier-like activities. But now, in this concluding section, the arrow is made to contain an increasing load of symbolic meanings, crammed with dynamic energy until it seems set for a space-flight into some unexplored realm of kinetic thinking in which the secrets of colour will be revealed. But just as we brace ourselves to crash the æsthetics-barrier the power falters, the space arrow fails to attain escape velocity, and we

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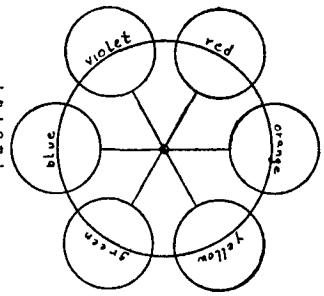


We have arrived at the spectral color circle where all the arrows are superfluous. Because the question is no longer: "to move there" but to be "everywhere" and consequently also "There!"

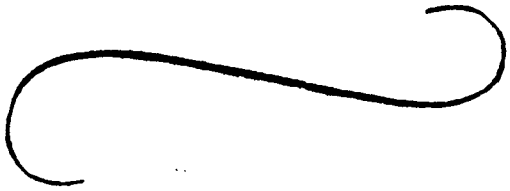
coast in for an emergency landing on the corniest of all academic concepts, the colour-wheel. To quote Alloway once more:

> Color has always been the most intractable element in æsthetics. From a colorist of Klee's genius it was legitimate to hope for more than the conventional circle of the spectrum: not only is this a serious let-down after the preceding original diagrams, it is a contradiction of Klee's dynamic world-view.

Whether this failure was specific in Klee or endemic to his generation is a knotty point for historians to unravel, and Alloway, though qualified to pass an historical judgement, was content merely to record his disappointment.

None of the other speakers came forward as historians, and only one spoke explicitly *in modo pedagogi*. He, Quentin Bell, subjected the book to an intensive scrutiny which was highly informative, though not only about Klee's teaching. He refused the *pons asinorum*.

> We are tripped upon the very threshold by the entry numbered I, 1. Here we read, "An active line on a walk, moving freely, without goal. A walk for a walk's sake. The mobility agent is a point, shifting its position forward." Beneath this stands a double-ended flourish thus



> At once we ask ourselves why, if the point (quite unnecessarily and most inelegantly referred to as a mobility agent) is moving freely and without a goal, it should follow a regular course with predetermined finishing points. . . .

This objection opens nearly every important question which can arise from this edition of the *Pedagogical Sketchbook*. First, the language difficulty—it seems likely that the translator's MS. from which this English edition was prepared was not originally intended for publication, but for the eye of a single reader to whom she—the translator—appears to have felt a necessity to overemphasise some of the overtones of the original German: further, the translation is not into the common idiom of Old World English, but into the specialised technical terminology of Chicago School æsthetics, and therefore needs to be handled with the same care as any other trade jargon. But beyond this lies the difficulty, rarely appreciated in England, of finding a verbal idiom which has a one-to-one correspondence with visual and therefore non-verbal processes. We must accept that if Paul Klee calls a line purposeless, or goal-less, then for him it is just that, and also for the purposes of this argument.

Thus, when Williamson objected that the caption and picture were incompatible:

> . . . when the hand has drawn such a line, no one can say from which end of the line the movement started. . . . To describe what would normally be termed a calligraphic flourish as "an active line on a walk, moving freely without goal" seems hyperbolic, useful as the phrase might be to a literary critic,

he was probably creating his own difficulties by not seeing proposition I, 1 in its natural context. An examination of the line, even in reproduction, suggests that a left-handed draughtsman could have made it in one direction only, without forcing his hand, and the exact status of the phrase "without goal" can be elucidated from other activities of the artist at the same period.

In the celebrated Jena lecture of 1924, which many people link closely with the *Sketchbook*, Klee said of line that it was primarily a function of measurement, and that "when the possibility of measurement is in doubt, line cannot have been handled with absolute purity"—a statement which sheds an interesting light on his early drawing, and on the ambiguous result of Roger Fry's experiment of making a ruled copy of a Klee drawing—separated from the original, the copy becomes an "original" in its own right, by virtue of the impersonality of the lines. In this context "what would normally be termed a calligraphic flourish" becomes a line without goal, by contrast with Klee's other lines of the period.

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THE importance of context was emphasised by Alloway, as we have seen, and by Victor Pasmore, who felt the need to treat the *Pedagogical Sketchbook* and *On Modern Art** (the English translation of the Jena lecture) as parts of the same "treatise"—and, indeed they are usefully complementary, the lecture roughing in a background of general concepts of art and nature to support the more technical matter in the *Sketchbook*. On the other hand, neither Williamson nor Bell expressed any interest in the historical context, the former surmising only that the book was incomplete (and, indeed, it is only a part of the notes he had accumulated) while the latter demanded a commentary. But neither seemed to be conscious of the fact that any teacher's pedagogic method must be a continuous group-biography of himself and his pupils, and that any epigraphic remains of this process must be incomplete by themselves. The great academic handbooks of the past have been written only from the side-lines of the teaching process, which was effectively conducted in the studio, brush in hand.

The *Pedagogical Sketchbook* is probably the first to have been generated within, and through, the living experience of the teaching process. As Pasmore said, it is "objective," it deals with acts, not ideal states. And as he also said, it is "vague. . . . It is essentially tentative in its approach. The student will look in vain for rules." On this point the two sides were agreed—to differ. Unlike Pasmore and Alloway, the objectors demanded a cut-and-dried academic text-book. Bell required that:

> there should be no shade of ambiguity, no doubt as to the use of terms, no unnecessary complication of thought,

even though he recognises that there are "some subjects which are inexpressibly difficult," while Williamson offered to compare Klee unfavourably with the last of the great academic teachers Gustave Moreau. But he also showed a characteristic misunderstanding which could provide a vital clue to the differences of opinion:

> The explanations of perspective are even more obscure than the usual ones, less complete and lacking any hint of the need at times to override Renaissance or "scientific" perspective. Anatomy is limited to little more than an exposition of one of the orders of levers. . . .

* FABER. 8s. 6d.

As we have seen, Klee in this context is not interested in perspective as such, nor, it seems, is he interested in anatomy as such, any more than he is interested in ballistics or hydraulics (or, to quote Klee himself, microscopy, history, or palæontology) as such. He is interested in them "only for the purposes of comparision only in the exercise of the mobility of his mind, and not to provide a scientific check on the truth of Nature." But in the academic discipline, anatomy and perspective are almost the master subjects, the two masonic mysteries which the student must master before he is encouraged to ignore them for the rest of his life.

Now neither Bell nor Williamson would be regarded as academics in ordinary English usage, and this division of opinion across a clear academic knife-edge sheds a curious light on the state of æsthetic thought in England today. We forget that the academic tradition is younger in England than the eldest living English painters. The Royal Academy has never really possessed it. Formed as a trades union, its ideal of beauty, as laid down by its first President, was statistical rather than absolute,* and was eroded away so quickly that B. R. Haydon could watch it vanishing in his own lifetime.

The academic tradition returned to England when Tonks went to teach at the Slade School at the turn of the century, implanting there the studio practices of the last generation of French academic masters, and this tradition nourished the first generation of English revolutionaries—Augustus John, Matthew Smith, Wyndham Lewis. But from the time of the first "Post-Impressionist" exhibition in 1911, successive generations of English æsthetes have employed the theories of academic continuators like Serusier or academic revivalists like Severini.† Thus, from Roger Fry, who believed that form could be *ipso facto* significant, to Herbert Read, who believes the laws of beauty to be absolute and permanent, English progressive criticism has been profoundly academic.

OPPOSITION to the depraved standards and æsthetic opportunism of the Royal Academy has meant, until recently, the acceptance of such academic apparatus as balance,

* Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Third Discourse*. The views on architectural style in the seventh discourse are also at variance with normal academic thought.

† *Du Cubisme au Classicisme*, 1921.

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numerical proportion, harmonies based on the colour-wheel, and so forth. It is this which underlies the apparent paradox of a younger generation, who tend now to reject these academic devices, even when their art is "abstract," yet can accept the late works of Klee on a parity with the early theories. The propositions of the *Sketchbook*—remembering that each is a picture as well as a text—though they are a loose fit on the late work, are still the best guide to his philosophy of process. But Williamson admits a failure of sensibility even in front of the early works. He finds their apparent simplifications a deficiency:

> . . . a kind of graphic shorthand . . . needs must be boiled down to a set of remote symbols which have later to be transliterated with some mental effort. . . . Klee's highly selective and economic outlook has made his inventions useful to graphic and humorous illustrators, and his work is unfailingly decorative.

To say this of Klee is to rate him with Constantin Guys, or Peter Arno—in which case interest in his works would be no more than historical curiosity.

But Klee's work is a live influence on a whole generation now reaching or enjoying artistic maturity, a generation to whom his symbols are anything but remote, and in the recent Seminars on Aesthetic Problems at the ICA he has been probably the most quoted source, followed—very characteristically—by the futurist Boccioni, and contrasted against Alberti, the foundation academic. His importance for this anti-academic tendency can best be seen in Pasmore's estimate of Klee's attitude to nature:

> The study of nature which Klee proposes, therefore, is not of the kind which tradition expects of the artist. If anatomy and perspective are considered it is not in relation to external effects as in traditional textbooks, but as analogies of internal processes. The traditional attitude to nature is defined by Reynolds in his discourses when he speaks of all rules as being "no more than teaching the art of seeing Nature." It is at once clear however that Klee was not concerned with seeing Nature in the sense of observing it from the distance. "Art," he writes "does not render the visible, but renders visible." This implies that the representation of things seen was not his concern. It is what the painting becomes that matters. If the *Sketchbook* can be described as an anatomy, therefore, it is not the anatomy of Nature's effects, but of its processes. As such its teaching centres around how to think, rather than how to see. . . . From this it is clear that Klee's attitude to nature is not strictly scientific. Instead it was one of inference and identification. It is through identification with nature's processes and not knowledge of them that Klee sets out to develop his art.

And Pasmore's concluding thoughts must be quoted in full:

> However, if the *Sketchbook* is unscientific in the strict sense of the word, it is not anti-science. Nor, as its concern with the mechanics implies, is it anti-machine. On the contrary, science and mechanics are its inspiration. The significant factor which it is necessary to comprehend, therefore, is that its outlook is essentially objective. In this respect it differs from all other modern teachings which are primarily subjective. The artist who aims purely at self-expression will find little help in these notes. On the contrary, Klee aims to provide the student with a concrete and objective basis from which to develop. He seeks this basis in Nature: but it is not in Nature's finished results, as in traditional art, but in its processes. Instead of subtracting from things seen, Klee begins with concrete formal elements—line, tone-values and colour. These he examines from every angle and in all their manifestations; observing their actions when submitted to the various conditions of mechanical and emotional forces. What happens to a line and what it becomes is his concern. If this is correct we must conclude that the *Sketchbook* is essentially constructive. Indeed it forms the basis for a kind of research laboratory. As such it may well serve to fill the gap to the modern approach to art-teaching. By modern teaching, however, I do not mean painting from life, or the study of the Old Masters, but the creative teaching practised in elementary schools or as advocated in a recent Penguin publication by Norman Colquhoun, entitled *Paint your own Pictures*. Self-expression, of an emotional kind, is rightly the basis of this teaching, but it does not account for the whole artistic or creative process. The growing mind wants to construct, rather than express. I often wonder if child art is fully appreciated. The moderns see in it, and take from it only emotional expression. But, for the child, are not these primitive images also an attempt at construction? It is possible to look on the phenomena of child art as constructions as well as expressions. This does not mean that Klee's *Sketchbook* is suitable only for children. On the contrary, it is essentially adult. The new creative spirit, inherent in the modern movement in art, requires an appropriate objective and constructive basis. Klee's *Pedagogical Sketchbook* will undoubtedly go a long way toward meeting this need.

This is a remarkable acceptance of one teacher's thought by another, but also of one artist's thought by another—and this may be a clue to Pasmore's acceptance; a community of graphic experience. But the acceptance is

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clearly based, as well, on a scrutiny of method, an approach which was enjoined by Alloway too:

> The crucial point is to decide whether or not what Klee wrote in 1925 is still relevant. The *Sketchbook* is at the heart of twentieth century ideas of spare-time, and I see no real evidence that motion studies are being replaced by another art-form. That is to speak as an art-critic; from the point of view of art-education I think that Klee's methods may still be potent; also, to replace the incoherent mixture of intuitives and academics in British art-schools by Klee's compound of precision and adventurousness would be a public service.

THIS, surely, is the most productive approach —to recognise that the *Pedagogical Sketchbook* is the product of a unique and unrepeatable historical situation, and scrutinise it for its method, rather than to demand that it should contain imperishable and particulate truths, which could still make linguistic sense when lifted out of context. To adopt this latter approach leads inevitably to Bell's general condemnation:

> Are these propositions put forth in a manner likely to bewilder and mislead a person of average intelligence? If this be the case (and Bell had already said that it was) the *Sketchbook* is not an efficient pedagogic instrument. More than that, it is in some measure a dangerous and pernicious work. Nothing is more pitiable than a mind that is ready to be humbugged . . . by a great name and a maze of pretentious language.

Or Williamson's unanswered question:

> . . . provocative and stimulating as the *Pedagogical Sketchbook* may be, is such a method likely to produce other creative masters, or nothing more than artists making use of Paul Klee mannerisms?

These objections are perfectly valid from the academic point of view, and indicate the fundamental nature of this division of opinion, which extends also to rival concepts of art teaching. As institutionalised in the British educational system art teaching is, in a very real sense, an academic system. At all levels from and above the Certificates of Education, the system is dominated by examinations whose standards represent the entrenched taste of the existing hierarchy. Nothing sinister or repressive is to be understood from this system, but it does induce in those involved in it an academic conception of art education as a process of injecting into the student a certain quantity of discrete pieces of information and rules of thumb.

The Bauhaus approach to education was radically different. It was liberative, and aimed to educe the innate capabilities of the student, and Klee's teaching activities were at the very heart of this process of liberation. Also, as Alloway pointed out, the Bauhaus ideal of educating the individual in the interests of the community was very close to Klee's heart "The People are not with us, but we seek a people. We began over there at the Bauhaus." One's acceptance of the *Pedagogical Sketchbook* is almost bound to be a mathematical function of one's ability to accept the Bauhaus programme of creative liberation through experience of craftsmanship. To try to bulldoze the *Sketchbook* into current English art-teaching would be as fatuous as are the attempts to recreate the Bauhaus in the nineteen-fifties. In either case, the result is apt to be the mere imposition of a style on activities in which it is not inherent. Seen in historical context, however, the Bauhaus effort to create an artistic ambience in which machine technology could, for the first time, take a valid place, was a heroic contribution to the life of this century. But it did not leave the subject closed. The immense step taken at the Bauhaus put art on a parity with the technology of 1925 only, and though it opened the way for subsequent steps it was not able to take them. Many of them remain to be taken even now, and though the Bauhaus experience cannot tell us what they are, or in what order they must be taken, it can suggest how the problems might be tackled. And if, outside the works of Gropius himself, there is any book which seems to be chopped from the very core of that heroic experience, it is the *Pedagogical Sketchbook*.

Reyner Banham

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Communications

THE "GOOD AMERICAN"

SIR—As a writer who has spent much time in America I read Mr. Fiedler's "The Good American" in the March issue of ENCOUNTER with great interest. (ENCOUNTER can do much good by printing articles of this kind.) And, until he became metaphysical at the end of his protest, Mr. Fiedler had my sympathy. I was astonished, however, that he could dismiss in one short phrase what lies, I believe, at the very root of the European intellectual's anti-American feeling. "American mass culture among the peoples moves inexorably into Europe," Mr. Fiedler observes in passing. He should have devoted the remainder of his article to a consideration of this process. It is my belief that this huge export drive of American big business in mass culture has created more anti-American feeling among European artists and intellectuals than all the Communist propaganda put together. It may be argued that mass communications merely give people what they want, but against this some of us would argue that once mass communications are raised to a certain level of power and efficiency—and for this task America has all the necessary resources—people can be manipulated to want what it is convenient and profitable to give them. Now American writers often benefit considerably from these enterprises, not only financially but also in terms of prestige; and if American writers have ever protested against them, I have not had the good fortune yet to read their protests. It is true, as I have pointed out more than once, that the American mind, with its great talent for satire, provides most of the best antidotes for its own poisons. But this is not justly reflected in the export trade of mass culture. I agree that European writers often do not attempt to understand the background of their American colleagues. But Mr. Fiedler must make a similar effort. He should appreciate the bitter despair of men who may now feel that their very livelihood is being threatened, who see their bookstalls crowded with foreign issues of American mass publications, who have watched their theatres and cinemas succumb to Hollywood ballyhoo, and who now await with terror the arrival of those monsters from outer space—the American-inspired TV programmes. The last thing most thoughtful men and women want to see is a world society shaped and coloured by American business men. So let us—Mr. Fiedler and I and the Italians who made him feel so uneasy—agree to do what we can to check this invasion. He can make a start at home while we do what we can here. But I suspect we will all do it better without metaphysics—and, of course, national intolerance.

J. B. PRIESTLEY

London, W.1

A MODEST PROPOSAL

SIR— . . . Mr. Kristol, with a gallantry we must applaud, comes to the relief of Miss Wedgwood's distress over the teaching of history in schools by suggesting that we abolish it, and, by so doing, not only alleviate Miss Wedgwood's anxiety but promote international understanding. He stresses the difficulty of the task, however, in the face of "vested interests." Let me strengthen his radicalism by pointing out that there is no need for his grudging resignation to its continuance: the feat of abolition which he considers almost hopeless is being achieved in Scotland, where, from next year, students will be forbidden to take history as a higher subject in their equivalent of the University Entrance examination.

This is a step in the right direction, but surely we can go further? On the basis of Miss Wedgwood's definition of a subject unsuitable for the immature, we note that it is not the achievement of puberty which gives us the necessary understanding to read, for example, Miss Wedgwood's books, but an experience of the world which could not be described as "little."

I do not think that Mr. Kristol would claim the experience of the average undergraduate—with which he is familiar—to be large. I suggest, then, that we abolish the subject not only in schools but in universities. Further, by the same definition, we should prohibit literature, philosophy, political science and any other subject in which compression

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and simplification are misleading and dangerous. Logically we must, unless we consider Hamlet's actions more readily understandable than Napoleon's, Plato simpler than the Norman Conquest, and the structure of the American Constitution easier to grasp than its origin—unless, of course, we abolish logic too.

Mr. Kristol's irritation with the average man's assumption of knowledge concerning Colonialism, Progress, and Reaction, and the origins of war, provokes sympathy. He points out that a century ago these recondite subjects were excluded from the schoolroom, and implies that our great-grandfathers, not having been unmanned by false simplifications, found it more difficult to misunderstand the policies of foreign governments or to attribute unjust motives to other nations. Misled by reading history, I had understood that it was not these subjects which were excluded from school but our great-grandfathers.

Mr. Kristol suggests that the study of history should be confined to "the happy few" (by "happy" I assume he considers the study might be a privilege—and, indeed, privileges are usually to the few). History could then take its rightful place as a foible of a minority, like stamp-collecting. Apart from the other advantages, this would leave the curriculum free for the greater study of arithmetic, which gives us balance-sheets, mathematics, which gives us bombers, and reading, which, untouched by literature, philosophy or history, gives us the daily newspaper. It is obvious that in a subject where the truth is difficult to ascertain it is not worth seeking. . . .

DONALD R. S. DEY

Glasgow

THE IDEA OF ASIA

SIR—European languages are, as François Bondy points out in your January number "Does 'Asia' Exist?", a medium of intercourse between different Asian cultures. However, when students of Tamil and Bengali literature communicate with each other in English, it does not follow that contacts through an Indian medium are impossible or that Bengalis and Tamilians are more akin to the English than to each other. As a matter of fact, in India concrete steps are being taken to replace English by Hindu as the state language. It is difficult to say whether the sciences, conceived as they are in terms of modern European languages, can be successfully propagated in an Indian language, but there is no reason why this experiment should fail in other directions.

Mr. Bondy to the contrary, on close scrutiny a common Asia does emerge from the mass of contradictions and counter-currents that go to make this vast continent. This is an attitude-of-mind Asia, not a political or cultural one. It gets its life-blood from the memories (or fear) of Western domination and the passive nationalism that characterises the people of this region. A similar unity exists in present-day Europe. The Soviet threat has done more to unify Europe than any sentiment or binding force that could have been of spontaneous origin. This unity is, both for Europe and Asia, a negative unity—a unity based on common hatreds rather than similar aims and objectives.

To me as an Asian, or should I say an Indian, Mr. Bondy's assertion that there exists no common Asian culture and tradition appears self-evident. It was largely European ignorance or indifference that insisted on lumping together such diverse peoples—diverse in both outlook and national temperament—as say the Japanese and the Indians under one common denominator. Anything or anyone east of Suez belonged to the mysterious, the exotic Orient! With the possible exception of the United States there does not exist any sizeable land-mass the people of which can be said to possess a truly common culture. This outstanding exception to a general rule finds a ready explanation in the manner in which the American continent was progressively colonised by immigrants from Europe and their subsequent expansion westwards. . . .

RAVINDER KUMAR

New Delhi

SIR—M. François Bondy's observations on Asia in ENCOUNTER, No. 4, exhibit the habitual approach of a Western mind towards Asia. How difficult it is for a Westerner to evaluate the complex matrix of our continent! . . .

Nehru once emphasised the presence of an "Asian temper." It is more evident to us than to the Westerner. . . . The cleavage in our cultural tradition is the result of the appearance of the Colonial Powers on the historical scene in the early 19th century. We were overwhelmed by the impact of a new culture. Prior to the British advent, India had been able to absorb the heterogeneous culture of such victor nations as the Greeks, Moguls, and Pathans. The nature of the British conquest was distinguished from the earlier ones in this respect: it made a cultural conquest of India. It disrupted the old organic cultural unity by disestablishing the rural craft economy. . . .

A Mohammedan in East Pakistan is different from a Beluchi or an Afridi in West Pakistan. In matters of outlook, dress, language, and way of living, he is closer to a West Bengal Hindu in

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India. An uninitiated Western eye is apt to misjudge the outer shell as the inner core. The course of Imperialism (which is dead now in most parts of Asia save to petty slogan mongerers) disrupted our cultural unity. Industrial expansion created a class of people whose sphere of education was severely limited to the exigencies of administrations. It was an education which was inimical to the growth of our own culture. . . . The backwash of past legacies still survives. I am no philistine in matters of culture, and we have certainly immeasurably benefited by Western culture. But we were till recently under the penumbra of isolation from our immediate neighbours and from our own people's culture, and we have just begun the process of rediscovering ourselves. We are trying to pick up the lost thread of contact that snapped 150 years or so ago. This cultural, as well as commercial, intercourse persisted even before the birth of Christ. We knew each other better than we know ourselves now. . . . The presence of the West with its imposition of an alien culture has been a powerful force dispelling this sense of oneness among us.

K. L. GOSWAMI

Calcutta

THE REAL MAHLER

SIR—Mahler is not so much underrated, as Mr. Humphrey Searle says in the December number of ENCOUNTER, as *unknown* in this country. Apart from a rare and superb performance of "Das Lied von der Erde" under Bruno Walter, or of the lovely Fourth Symphony under Sir Thomas Beecham the rest are uniformly execrable: as often as not the players don't even know the notes let alone the music, and the conductors don't seem to be well qualified to lead them into either.

The Mahler symphonies are exceedingly exacting in their demands; they are the work of one of the greatest masters of the orchestra of all time, a master who did not just orchestrate but thought in terms of the orchestra. Conductors who, as so many of them do,

with wind drum blunderbuss and thunder
rend, with tremendous sound your ears asunder'

and think that that is the beginning and end of a Mahler performance would do well to turn their attention to a more suitable occupation, say house-breaking. As for the generality of "critical" ("God give us patience!") opinion here as to Mahler's prolixity, longwindedness, the banality, and triteness of his musical matter—when I first started studying the Mahler Symphonies thirty or so years ago, and heard the kind of performance we know all too well here, I thought much the same. It was only as I got to know them, as it were, from the inside, that I began to realise with astonished delight that the banalities, the trivialities, the *longueurs* were not in Mahler at all but in what his performers made of him.

It is said—indeed I myself first said it twenty years ago—that there was possibly some spiritual incompatibility of temper between the English audience and Mahler (as there is between Elgar and the Latin-European audience) and that his work would possibly never make much headway here. Be that as it may, performances that are mangled travesties, hardly more than public read-throughs, are no sort of basis for the estimation of work as complex and intricate as that of Mahler, or for that matter, of anyone.

KAIKHOSRU SHAPURJI SORABJI

Corfe Castle, Dorset

SELF-IMPOSED CENSORSHIP

SIR—While the unsatisfactory nature of the official machinery of censorship of literary and scientific works is well known, it is perhaps less generally realised that various bodies within the book-trade itself exercise a censorship which is almost more alarming because it is insidious.

A recent instance is provided by Mr. G. Rattray Taylor's book *Sex in History*. This was widely and favourably reviewed: and the name of the author and that of the general editor of the series of which it is a part, Mrs. Jacquetta Hawkes, by themselves indicate, what the perusal of the book confirms, that it is a sober and significant work, of considerable public interest. Nevertheless, one of the largest firms of booksellers in Britain has advised the majority of its branches that they should not stock it, while one of the largest lending libraries in the country has instructed its branches that the book should not be bought except at the direct request of a subscriber, and that even then it should not be placed on the shelves.

While the question can hardly be divorced from the larger issue of the unsatisfactory nature of our approach to the control of literary works generally, yet it is surely undesirable that private bodies should undertake the responsibility of discouraging the sale of works of repute—and least of all the book-trade, whose proper task is surely to encourage the sale of such works.

KATHLEEN NOTT

London, S.W.5

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BOOKS

SPECIAL BOOK NUMBER

THE GREAT BOW

"WHEN the West slumbers, the East awakens"—so, if I remember correctly, runs the old adage, and its interpretations, at this moment of history, can be many. Inwardly interpreted, it may mean no more than this: that when the West slumbers within us, the East comes to life in the psyche. When our own inherited patterns of Western thought begin to go sterile—when they no longer yield the life-giving waters—we go to the East, like ancient Rome, for our new gods. Since the end of the War, I have been impressed by the fact that a number of American soldiers returning from the occupation of Japan have become interested in Zen Buddhism. The numbers, in my experience, were hardly so great that one could even begin to think of anything near a "trend"; but there was something in the spectacle of these good Methodist boys from the Middle West becoming fascinated by one of the most remarkable and typical expressions of the East that gave me pause, and summoned up the ancient image of conquering Rome being conquered by the gods of the peoples it had conquered. The West, we must remember, has always gone to the East for its gods (including Christianity), and it may be the mark of this particular period of history that the intellectual brilliance of the West, if it is to avoid destroying itself by neurosis, will have to learn some of the spiritual techniques of the East—even while the East itself seems hell-bent on cutting itself off from its past and acquiring the secrets of Western technology and power. The opposites, it would seem, must always pass into each other for the sake of completion.

The problem of our culture is the religious problem. I consider this a purely empirical generalisation based on my observation of American intellectuals, most of whom, whether conscious of it or not, are dying of spiritual inanition. Not much has changed since the days when T. S. Eliot wrote *The Waste Land*. Rereading that poem recently, after many years away from it, I found it still crackling with all kinds of high-voltage electricity. If not his greatest, it is certainly Eliot's most brilliant poem, and still a parable for Western intellectuals in our time. What unbearable nervousness in that poem, how desperately haunted it is by the religious symbols of the past, and how compulsively and blindly (at that time) Eliot clutches for some symbol that will connect up his mind with his feelings! Such, always, is the psychological efficacy of the religious symbol for the intellectual. The bleak, brittle, ironic, negative feeling of Eliot's earlier poems reaches its culmination in the nervousness of *The Waste Land*, and it is significant that the first real flow of *positive* feeling appears in his poetry only with *Ash Wednesday* after his conversion to Anglo-Catholicism. This inability to feel, since *Faust*, has been a haunting theme of the modern intellectual, and it has very much to do with the death of Western religion. But where Eliot found the reconciling symbol, thousands have been unable to follow him; and even in a few converts I have seen a strangling of the individual within the Catholic structure, the problem of his psychological wholeness still remaining unsolved after conversion. The spiritual problem of Western man—intellectual and non-intellectual, believer and non-believer

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alike—still remains pretty much unsolved. Hence the importance for us of an understanding of Zen.

All of this may appear far-fetched and roundabout in getting to a discussion of Mr. Herrigel's little book.* But in matters of the spirit a small occasion may sometimes do as well or even better than a large one; and, in any case, the book was exciting and moving enough to have provoked very general ideas and feelings —not in the least confined to the bending of a bow and shooting of an arrow—in my own mind.

Mr. Herrigel went to Japan in the early 'thirties as a young visiting professor of philosophy at the University of Tokyo. He had been interested in mysticism, and particularly curious about Zen Buddhism as one of the unique expressions of Oriental mysticism. In Japan he wanted to become initiated into Zen, but as a foreigner he was told that if he were to avoid abstract dilettanteism, he must apprentice himself to some concrete art, since Zen, in any case, is immersed in the concrete matters of daily life. Mr. Herrigel chose the ancient art of archery, and for six years (until his departure from Japan) he practised drawing the long Japanese bow, all the while learning and struggling to bend the much greater bow of the spirit. His book is a simple account of his experiences in handling the bow and the vastly more significant inner experiences that came with this and were directed towards the formation of a Self—which is the single goal of Zen religion and philosophy.

WHAT is Zen? Perhaps a few words in explanation may help the Western reader to know what Mr. Herrigel's book is all about. When Buddhism crossed from India to China in the 7th century of our era, it suffered a great transformation in the encounter with the practical down-to-earth Chinese civilisation. The Indian word for contemplative meditation was Dyana; this became Ch'an in Chinese, and Zen when this form of Buddhism later crossed into Japan. Hence, Zen Buddhism is the flower growing from the cross-fertilisation of the two greatest civilisations of the Orient,—India and China.

In India, Buddhism had become elaborated in a very complex and highly intellectual system of metaphysical speculation. The concrete Chinese mind broke through the shackles of this intellectualism. It perceived that an intellectual may become just as much imprisoned in his ideas as the sensualist in the flesh, and so just as much cut off from salvation. Moreover, if the goal we seek is Enlightenment, which comes only with self-surrender, can we really surrender ourselves if we clutch at Enlightenment as a system of intellectual truths? Man can so easily become the victim of his ideas, which become henceforth so many psychological blinders or blind spots. The intellect has to be transcended (just as any other *partial* function, psychological or physical, must be transcended for the sake of wholeness), and the Zen Masters concentrated, with patience and energy and over long centuries, on the problem and means of breaking the shackles of the intellect. Could any doctrine be more apposite for the intellectuals of the West, who have been perplexed to distraction by the problem of the irrational since Dostoevsky and Nietzsche? The intellect has never solved, and will never solve, the problem of life: in the whole history of mankind, East and West alike, the great individuals, the geniuses at life, who have broken through and found a meaning for themselves and their life, have never done so by intellect alone, and the meaning they found was never purely intellectual.

Suppose we go a step further; suppose we consider the man who has attained the transforming experience of Nirvana (Enlightenment). What does he do the next day? He must rise, breakfast, shave, go to his work, whatever it may be. Is the Enlightenment something separate from the daily routine? Does it belong to some transcendental world cut off from that of daily life? But Enlightenment is supposed to be a perception of that Unity in which all the warring opposites of life cease. In that case, Enlightenment itself would be no different from non-Enlightenment! This is the supreme paradox to which the Zen masters were not only driven but which they energetically embraced as the truth. Therefore, say these masters, Zen is the "everyday mind." Spirit must realise itself in the ordinary everyday world, for there is nowhere else for it to realise itself.

**Zen in the Art of Archery*. By EUGEN HERRIGEL. With a foreword by D. T. SUZUKI. Routledge and Kegan Paul. 9s. 6d.

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PARRISH

All of this lay behind Mr. Herrigel's learning to shoot a bow and arrow. Far from being a mere matter of acquiring a skill, the act of archery had to become *spiritualised.* He must learn to shoot the bow as if he were a "purposeless tension"—as if he were not drawing the bow, and bow, target, and archer were one, as if *It* were doing all this and he were merely the instrument of the action. The action must be performed with a complete loss of ego-consciousness. Naturally, in this respect, archery becomes a paradigm of what the whole of life might also become: an artless art, a purposeless purpose, a self-surrender which is the fullest affirmation of the self.

Mr. Herrigel's book is by far the best book on Zen to appear by a Westerner. In comparison with the incomparable Suzuki, the apostle of Zen to the West and really one of the foremost religious writers of our time, Mr. Herrigel is the more stiff and rigid Westerner, for Suzuki, as an Oriental, writes with suppleness and flow of life itself. But Mr. Herrigel's book has the great advantage for the Westerner in that it deals with a concrete physical activity, and the Westerner is likely to feel that he is being conned where any discussion of the spirit goes on unless he has some tangible reality to cling to. (On the other hand, of course, he will allow himself to be conned by all sorts of preposterous things like behaviourism, Reichianism, positivism, etc.—practically anything so long as *physical* reality is not in doubt.) The Western reader should be prepared by this little book to go on to the works of Suzuki himself.

SINCE this review, as a review, has already overshot itself, I can hardly leave matters here without appending some further remarks about Zen, which may appear, but in fact are not, a sudden and startling reversal of field. My own conviction is that Zen (or any other Oriental form) cannot be a solution to the spiritual problem of Western Man, and I would even adduce in support of this, despite all its positive merits, a certain remote and abstract quality in Mr. Herrigel's book. In my own limited efforts in this direction I have found Zen intellectually awakening and vivifying, but it has hardly purveyed the life-giving waters of the spirit; and in my observation of other Westerners who were far more adept in the subject than I was I could never altogether

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escape from the suspicion of something *raffiné* and remote. After all, we Westerners are Westerners, and nowhere less than in matters of religion are we likely to escape from the psychological burden of our past. The Westerner in a depression falls asleep and dreams of a church on Holy Saturday in darkness, lying in wait for the resurrection of Easter, and he awakens stirred but puzzled, for he has been cut off from this form of religious belief for twenty or thirty years; but cut off or not, it is still in the forms of that religion he dreams. And the Western intellectual, falling ruinously in love against his will, will groan out some prayer, which perhaps he did not even know that he remembered from childhood, to Mary the Holy Mother of God and not to Kali, mother of the gods—however much he may think Hindu religion more subtle and deeper than the West. However our conscious minds may value the greater psychological penetration of the religions of the East, and whatever our conscious intellectual and æsthetic preferences may be, the fact is that religion has to do with a deeper part of the self which sends down roots into our own particular collective past. The creature that is most deeply us is the creature of flesh and blood, and therefore of our childhood, parents, and race; and this is the creature that is wakened to life in our moments of personal anguish. When I am deeply troubled, I read the Psalms for consolation and not the Zen scriptures of Buddhism, however barbarous psychologically some of the content of the former may appear in relation to the latter. Our Western civilisation has been formed essentially by the religion of Judaism, which has an infinitely more urgent, personal, and sublimely active tone—and let us confess it, an infinitely cruder and more barbarous psychology—than that of the Oriental religions. But such as we are, we are it; and the way of wisdom is always to acknowledge what one is in order to know what resources one has to work on. The West has a very great deal to learn from the study of the Oriental religions if it is to overcome psychological crudities that have lain at its root since its very beginnings; but one can arrive at the spirit, after all, only by refining one's own barbarisms.

William Barrett

COSSACKS OF DESTINY

THIS is the first volume of a life of Trotsky,* by the author of the well-known biography of Stalin. It has the same merits and defects as the earlier work. The style is clear and readable, marred only by occasional scraps of stale revolutionary rhetoric. It is based on scrupulous and exhaustive study of all materials relating to the central personage, combined with curious gaps in historical knowledge (sometimes amounting to schoolboy "howlers") and indifference to the actions and fate of persons who were not Leninists. It would be temptingly easy to conform to the boorish practice, now so popular with book reviewers, of concentrating on the factual errors and dubious interpretations with which Mr. Deutscher's five hundred pages are lavishly sprinkled. It would however be more honest, and more useful to readers, to point out that this book is not only enjoyable to read but also a very convenient source for serious students of Russia, of Communism, and indeed of the world around us. Readers should treat Mr. Deutscher's historical judgements with the greatest reserve. But they should be thankful to him for his excellent summary of Trotsky's early theories—so hard to find in the original today—and for the new information on his Red Army career which Mr. Deutscher has found in the Trotsky Archives at Harvard. In his second volume he will probably have considerably more original material to offer us, and we can look forward with pleasure to its appearance.

Here it may be worth while to raise two general questions that arise from the study of Trotsky.

The first is the difference between Trotsky and the other Bolshevik leaders. It is obvious

* *The Prophet Armed.* by ISAAC DEUTSCHER. Oxford University Press. Geoffrey Cumberlege. 30s.

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that he was intellectually the most brilliant of them all. In this, he overshadowed even Lenin. It was he who first propounded the doctrine of permanent revolution, which in fact Lenin adopted in 1917—whatever Stalinist scribes may say about it thirty years later. Trotsky often, though not always, showed real insight into international problems. He was wrong about the impending German revolution early in 1918, but he was right about the folly of invading Poland in 1920. Trotsky was, however, inferior to Lenin in his treatment of individuals: not that Lenin was a tactful or tolerant man, but he paid the greatest attention to party discipline and organisation, and to the relations of party members with each other and with him. Trotsky hardly bothered about such things. As for Stalin, he was a genius in the management of men and institutions, in this greatly superior not only to Trotsky but to Lenin himself. Both Lenin and Stalin emphasised that the party must lead the masses, but must not run on too far ahead of them. It must neither be so daring as to lose touch nor so cautious as to lag behind the "elemental" movement of the working class. But Trotsky was always running ahead. In moments of catastrophic crisis, his courage and his rhetoric could capture a mood of heroic despair in the masses, and lead them to perform miracles. But when the crisis and the mood were past, he was left far ahead, and his heroic gestures looked like comic antics. His enemies made good use of the contrast.

Yet Lenin, Stalin, and Trotsky had in common a quality that was rare in that period of human history which ended in 1914—a complete indifference to all moral considerations. Lenin and Stalin might reject a course of action because they did not feel they could take the Party along with them, but to reject a course of action because it was inhuman would not occur to any of the three. Rejecting not only God but any absolute moral standard, they believed without hesitation in the perfectibility of man by blood and iron, in the ineluctable progress of history, to be whose instruments was their only glory. The Bolsheviks were not the first to claim that religion is superstition and that morality is relative, but they were the first who not only genuinely cast off all moral inhibitions but also had, and used, the opportunity to try out their beliefs on the living flesh of a hundred million men and women. Western intellectuals may chatter harmlessly of the relativity of morality: they are restrained both by the checks and balances of Western society and by the profound influence on their own minds of the Christian traditions which they reject. The Bolshevik leaders knew no such restraints. Russian society was rent by conflicts not only between different classes but between different cultures. The régime was held together only by force, cumbrously and weakly wielded yet stronger than any of its opponents. Whether there was in fact anything that can be called Russian society is a point on which there is room for doubt. If there was, a large part of the intelligentsia lived outside it. Fifty years of the twin obscurantisms of Pobedonoftfev and Dobrolyubov, of the spokesmen of autocracy and the revolutionary utilitarians, had done their work too well. Art, literature, philosophy, and morals exist only to serve the People and the Revolution—such was the prevalent view. And from the ranks of the disaffected intelligentsia emerged a small minority of active revolutionaries who arrogated to themselves the right to speak for the People, or the Workers, whose interests they alone knew, and would assert, as soon as they had their chance.

THE imbecility of Nicholas II and the victories of Ludendorff gave them their chance. In the last decades before 1917 the forces of sanity had been growing fast among all social groups in Russia—among the workers, among the peasants, and even in the ranks of the intelligentsia and of the bureaucracy itself. But her last Emperor crippled Russia, and the German Army finished her off.

What happened in November 1917 and afterwards?

"The Russian workers, led by *their* Bolshevik Party, seized power by the Great October Socialist Revolution. Nearly three years of civil war almost exhausted them, and the workers of Europe betrayed the cause of Revolution. Though outnumbered in a backward country, surrounded by a hostile world, and forced to use machinery of government inherited from the Tsars, the Russian workers resolutely struggled to build socialism."

Such would be the Bolshevik answer, and such, approximately, is Mr. Deutscher's view.

What really happened was something different. Military defeat broke the will to

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power of those who wielded the bureaucratic machine. With the machine no longer working, Russian society disintegrated. Primitive violence and wild utopian longings spread in all classes and all parts of the country. Neither the chaos nor the longings were the work of the Bolsheviks, but they made good use of both. The workers of Petrograd were their first instrument, the Red Army created by the organising genius of Trotsky was their second. As the civil war went on, the Bolshevik nucleus of power was consolidated and expanded. The bloody suppression of the workers and sailors of Kronstadt and the peasants of the Middle Volga in early 1921 completed the victory. In the West nothing of the sort happened or could happen. In Germany, defeat in war did not bring collapse of the state machine, still less disintegration of society. The overwhelming majority of the German workers followed their Social Democrat leaders, and the freely elected congress of representatives of Workers Councils voted the Councils out of existence and chose a democratic republic. The spread of Communist revolution through Europe was never anything but a mirage.

But in Russia the socialist revolution was a mirage too. What Russia got was not a socialist republic but absolute autocracy for a small group of self-appointed interpreters of Historical Destiny. Lenin and Trotsky and Stalin were not ambitious for themselves. To some extent they shared the utopian dreams of the masses whom they mobilised, led, and exploited. The utopian dreams, the chaos, and the ocean of suffering, give the events of 1917–21 a romantic grandeur and horror which have captured the imagination of many writers and historians. But the dreams faded, and the reality—Bolshevik total power—remained. Lenin died, Trotsky was outwitted by his superiors in the art of bureaucratic manœuvre, and it was Stalin who built the first totalitarian state in history. But if Lenin had lived on, or Trotsky had beaten his rivals, the result would not have been much different. Stalin, the subject of Mr. Deutscher's last dramatic sentence ("The dictator was waiting in the wings"), may have been a coarser, crueller, and viler man than Lenin or Trotsky. But it was not this that was decisive. Give absolute power over a vast and backward nation to a tightly disciplined clique of professional revolutionaries who claim to possess the final scientific truth about human society, who regard men and women as clay to be moulded to the purposes of History, and who have consciously abandoned, in practice as well as in theory, all absolute moral standards, and you can get only one result—totalitarianism. Whether the leader's name is Ulyanov or Bronstein or Djugashvili matters a good deal less.

Hugh Seton-Watson

POETS, PRIESTS, AND SCIENTISTS

To her discussion of the relationship between poetry and science,* Miss Kathleen Nott brings so committed a love for literature, so pure a passion for freedom, and so deep a piety towards science, that one compelled to disagree with her conclusions can only hope his motives half so honourable as hers. The title of her book suggests, justly enough, the image of her crying as disinterestedly as a child the truth to a bamboozled world. But *her* Emperor is, it turns out, not really naked, only arrayed in garments of too clerical a cut. In fact, he is not an Emperor at all, but rather a Pope, or more precisely, a self-appointed Anglican Archbishop called T. S. Eliot.

Miss Nott, as both a poet and a defender of what she calls variously humanism, liberalism, and the experimental method, is troubled lest Mr. Eliot's deserved prestige as "one who restored poetry to itself" enable him to persuade others to his religious and social ideas. Her attack is directed not only against him, but also against other "neo-Scholastic" writers: Graham Greene, Dorothy Sayers, and C. S. Lewis (with T. E. Hulme cast as the serpent in the Garden), as supernumeraries in the drama of the Fall from Reason. But it is the paternal

* *The Emperor's Clothes.* By KATHLEEN NOTT. Heinemann. 18s.

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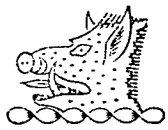

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image of the author of *The Waste Land* that haunts her and must be exorcised: the Old Man, wittily downgraded to the Old Lady, "a dignified landlady who without a word retrieves the tribal ornaments from the cupboard . . . and puts them back on the mantelpiece."

Miss Nott is witty elsewhere, too, as in her castigation of the pious who think of the Heisenberg Principle of Indeterminacy as causing rejoicing in Heaven, or when she aptly labels one of her chapters "The Dogma in the Manger." But her normal tone is righteous and aggrieved as is proper to one who thinks of our precarious intellectual adulthood as eternally threatened by priests and politicians. Miss Nott fears not merely some priests and politicians but *all* exponents of organised power or religion who, by "perverting language," deprive us of a necessary "tool of survival"; and it is against these that the poets and scientists must defend us and each other.

One cannot apparently be a good poet without being a good man, that is, a believer in Miss Nott's "science," which alone protects the writer from the temptation to rely on "false abstractions," words which the semanticists have told us are only "noise, something like a radio operator's static"—namely, God, Being, Eternity, Sin, and Mind. At least, Miss Nott *wishes* life were rational enough so that this might be true, that "poetry and literature . . . must if they are not to wither, establish some positive relations with science. . . ." But she is driven to confess that "only the rarest poets have been able to live in a positive relation to the available knowledge of their time." And quite discreetly, she does not even name these few.

She is, however, prepared to give a general example of how that poetry "whose statements challenge verification" becomes quite soon of merely antiquarian interest, adducing all "love poetry written at any period which conflicts with the naturalistic unconventionalised experience by one sex of another." But the very touchstones of love poetry which Miss Nott has quoted only a few pages earlier turn out to be based one on the Petrarchan convention, one on a Puritan aversion from sex (with "platonic" homosexualism in the background), another on the Christian belief in the resurrection of the body, still another on a complicated neo-Platonic conceit, etc. For there is, of course, in poetry at least, only one or another *bella menzogna*, no "naturalistic unconventionalised, etc. etc."

The limits of her theory Miss Nott really knows, and even somewhat grudgingly admits: "I do not say that all poets and novelists who substitute theological generalisations for a sound psychology will be led absolutely away from wisdom . . . but . . ." Not "all" and not "absolutely," *but* . . . And finally, she is astonishingly modest in her assertion that the "health of poetic language" *might* flourish as well under the hegemony of science as under that of the Christian world view. Yet earlier she has insisted that only a "positive" relation with knowledge could prevent poetry's "withering," and we cannot allow her as a critic the poet's privilege of having the cake he eats.

MISS NOTT never solves the problem from which she begins: that in our time the majority of the most admired writers have been neither "rationalists" nor "liberals" in any ordinary sense of those words. This would include, in addition to Miss Nott's expurgated list, others as various as D. H. Lawrence, Kafka, Rilke, Pound, Mauriac, Bernanos, Yeats, etc., who have all combined a fondness for "false abstractions" with an indifference to, or contempt for, democracy as Miss Nott defines it. Writers like Kafka, Rilke, Lawrence, and, I gather, even Yeats are exempted from Miss Nott's condemnation on the grounds (which any poet would consider a mortal insult) that, being private and eccentric, their mythologies "cannot do much harm to anyone. . . ." Indeed, Miss Nott is prepared to accept any "myth" which knows its place (a provisional status as "intuitive interpretations of reality which are later analysed and expanded in the particular sciences"); but her description of poetry as "tragic, naturalistic, and mythic" is an attempt to exorcise by definition the incompatibility our best poets have found between "naturalism" and either myth-making or tragedy. To limit the conflict between our best art and our noblest prudence to the conflict between that prudence and Christian art alone is to distort the situation; and to limit Christian art even further to one whose values depend upon a marriage between authoritarianism and the doctrine of Original Sin is to falsify it completely.

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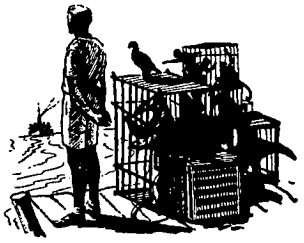

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One can sympathise with Miss Nott's strictures against those to whom the belief in the possibility of damnation has become the most elegant of snobbisms, the condescension of those who know precisely how to behave in Hell towards the boors who do not even know they are there. But it is impossible to accept her conviction that a belief in Original Sin is *necessarily* linked with authoritarianism. One thinks of Reinhold Niebuhr, F. O. Matthiessen, or W. H. Auden who have argued that, indeed, the only specific against the pride that leads to totalitarianism is a humility based on the recognition of our radical imperfection.

Furthermore, one has the sense that Miss Nott thinks the chief threat to our liberties comes from orthodox Christianity; at least her moral forces seem all to be deployed in that direction, though the authoritarian threat has come in every major instance in our century from those who cry out with Miss Nott against the organised churches. There is something almost pre-lapsarian in the innocence of Miss Nott's belated cry of "*Ecrasez l'infame!*" It reminds us not only of how the Enlightenment taught us to watch for our enemies in the wrong quarter but also of how dewy were the most cynical of the *philosophes*, from whose long-dead mouths Miss Nott's charges seem eerily to come. "The non-scientific concept of Original Sin . . . is also . . . the only belief which allows us to destroy babies and the unborn in peace of conscience." It is difficult to make sense of this "scientific" assertion. To my own untidy mind, the first association is with birth control and abortion, but this is surely not the offence of the "non-scientific" believer; my second thought is of mass bombing, the practice of an emancipated world convinced precisely of its Original Innocence; my third—but surely it is not the weary charge of "infant damnation" that is on Miss Nott's mind?

It is, however, true, that *one* major English poet, at least, combines an orthodox theory of the Fall with ideas about reorganising society that are equally remarkable for their narrowness, their nostalgia, and their impracticability. The problem of Mr. Eliot is a literary one rather than a genuinely political one, but it is a real problem for writers and intellectuals. How can we come to terms with one whose political values we find false, but whose example as a poet has delivered us from bondage to a language at once dead and consecrated?

Those who feel strongly enough that life should be consistent, can easily make it so by adjusting in either of two directions: accepting Mr. Eliot's world view because it has produced our most distinguished poetry; or deciding that Mr. Eliot is, after all, not the poet he seemed before we knew he was a royalist, monarchist, and authoritarian. Miss Nott would like to live with the contradiction; and as the Christian hates the sin but not the sinner, she would like to hate the dogma but not the poet who thrives on it. And she almost succeeds, attempting to save not only Mr. Eliot but his theory of the "dissociation of sensibility" as well, and even his new canon of English poetry. But she is finally not capable of so heroic a dissociation of her own sensibility. Always in her mind, her thesis is at work, nagging, nagging: a poetry not positive in its relations to science must decay. And so, though she begins by asserting of Mr. Eliot that "no one can question his importance as critic and poet," she feels obliged to note by the way that he has "a distaste for copulation," doesn't really love his neighbours, slanders the poor, portrays women as mostly "neurotic, ugly and savage . . . "; and she finally discovers, to her obvious relief, that from *Ash Wednesday* on he has been slipping, yielding to "stock images"; that he has "sacrificed . . . too many of the naturalistic advantages of poetry. . ."; that he is, in short (she does not quite use Matthew Arnold's phrase, but clearly suggests it), a "classic of our prose."

It is not really Mr. Eliot whom Miss Nott temperamentally prefers, but those very Romantics against whom his critical strategies were directed, and who are for her "as pure and precise, as faithful to the object . . . as any the world has ever seen." Her whipping boys are poor old Grey and Collins, "the prolonged dullness, artificiality and poeticism which blighted much of eighteenth century poetry." We are happily back to Wordsworth—but not quite, for Miss Nott's Nature equals Science and is not the nature of Wordsworth.

Yet no more is her science the science of the atomic physicist; for the word as she uses it is at once too broad and too narrow to satisfy a mere scientist. She begins by denying that scientific statements are qualitative statements;

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and in the end uses "science" as a vague honorific meaning "continuing and related experience," and approximately equivalent to rationalism, liberalism, humanism, or even the teachings of Jesus! As Miss Nott reads the Gospels, primitive Christianity shuns all "abstractions" and "mystifications" like Sin or Punishment, in favour of what are really "biological observations," though the unenlightened have failed to see it for nearly two thousand years. The words attributed to Jesus are not a world-denying morality based on a momentary expectation of the world's end, but "remarkably exact and vivid statements about human psychological laws," or conversely, "the language of the contemporary psychologists is a closer translation [of the Sermon on the Mount] than the dogma of the Church. . . ." Quite unexpectedly, we are in another argument about the Apostolic Succession (who is the true Archbishop of Canterbury: Henry Stack Sullivan, Karen Horney, or Alexander Neill?).

It should be clear now why Miss Nott has concentrated her fire against the Christian assumptions about human nature, since her science *par excellence* is "experimental psychology," or (alas, words are tricky things) more precisely "depth psychology," which the majority of rigidly scientific psychologists would insist is not experimental at all. Indeed, Miss Nott's "science" is not even orthodox Freudianism, but one of the cheerier heresies which she does not identify precisely. Freud is, to her, still too much the priest or prophet behind his scientist's mask: "One cannot miss the implication that Reality is somehow right and Pleasure somehow wrong . . . the theological notion that our instinctive drives are sinful."

It is from her revisionist Freudian vantage that Miss Nott is able to diagnose the "individual frustrations and dislikes" which have led Mr. Eliot to espouse the "Augustinian" psychology, and the Victorians to deny that sex is pleasurable, which denial underlies the persistence of the dogma of Original Sin. Miss Nott is apparently quite undismayed by the fact that the doctrine of Augustine was subscribed to by such resolutely "un-Victorian" minds as, for instance, Chaucer's; and one is warned off from taking her statements about sex too seriously by her repetition of the

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mindless platitude that the French remained adult in their understanding of passion, while the "English had become infantile." What French, one asks hopelessly? Flaubert with his nightmare of finding his beloved turned into the withered form of his mother, Maupassant convinced that copulation was nature's joke on us, the Marquis de Sade?

But whether based on science or popular mythology there is hope in Miss Nott: if only reason could be applied to men's relations, sexual and political; if only we were delivered from the fear and superstition of organised religion; if only—"If men learn," Miss Nott cries, nobly indifferent to the distinction of ends and means, "to think consistently in the direction that leads to aeroplanes, they will also think in the direction away from authoritarianism. . . ." In the light of actual experience, I find this the most outrageous statement I have ever encountered, except only for the verse in *Proverbs* which asserts, "I have never seen a just man begging for bread."

I suppose, however, that both these declarations must be understood as strategies for expressing positively a negative conclusion about mankind. To the protestor who says A is a just man and is, in fact, begging, the answer is: because he is begging, he is not just. Similarly, to the dissenter who cries that B lives by the principles of science yet bullies his wife and votes Communist, Miss Nott's answer would be: ah, but this shows he is not yet totally a scientist.

It all reminds me somehow of my difficulties as an undergraduate with my physics instructor, to whom I said one day, "But what does it *mean* to say that if a particle attains the speed of light its mass will become infinitely great? Can we *really*——" "Damn it!" he interrupted, losing patience with my literal mind, "this is just a useful way of saying that it's *impossible* to pass that speed. It's a theory of limits."

I suppose that in the same way the writer of *Proverbs* must mean that no man can be truly just, and Miss Nott (though I suspect she would never admit it) that no man can be perfectly "scientific," though he can move in that direction. But this is a psychological theory of limits—or, as I understand it, precisely what is meant by the doctrine of Original Sin.

Leslie A. Fiedler

FIVE NOVELS

In England, the novel of ideas and the novel of style have always been rather uneasily united. When English novelists think, they tend to sprawl, to lose their sense of decorum. And, in recent years, the fissure between these two kinds of writing seems to have become wider. Evelyn Waugh, for example, when he is not writing witty social satire—when, in fact, he takes a serious theme seriously—is inclined to become vulgar and uncontrolled. The late George Orwell who, in *1984*, probably handled one of the most ambitious subjects ever attempted by an English novelist, had a forceful, direct style rather than a subtle one. Probably not since *A Passage to India* has the novel of ideas been perfectly blended with the novel of style. For style is not merely the expression of the personality of the writer, it is a way into a world; it is not only an attitude to language, it is an attempt to force language to do new things. It deepens and strengthens words.

One, possibly two, of the novels under review can be fairly said to blend both idea and style. *A Single Pilgrim* by Norman Lewis* is not one of these. The difficulty about this book is that one is not sure what the writer is trying to do. His main plot concerns John Crane, manager of a timber company in Laos, Siam. But his theme is the Communist disturbance in Laos and the conflict between white men and natives. Mr. Lewis never quite succeeds in combining his plot and his theme, so that his novel has rather the effect of a reproduction in which the paint has slipped beyond the outlines

* *A Single Pilgrim*. By Norman Lewis. Cape. 12s. 6d.

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of the drawing. This effect is partly caused by the many side-issues that Mr. Lewis introduces —the love-affair of the clerk, Richards, with a native girl, and his eventual conversion to Communism, the equivocal, rather threatening American character, Confelt, who advocates "global strategy." But the real difficulty in the book lies in the character of John Crane himself. He is a man who is happily married as long as his wife is not with him and, indeed, he has seen very little of her owing to the war and his job. Mr. Lewis says of him: "The genie was his life as it had been and everything connected with it, all the untidy tag-ends of past inadequacy and past failure. The weekly letter home was the jar. . . . And then, with the small weekly sacrifice completed, the past was again sealed with oblivion. . . ."

Neither John Crane nor this novel comes fully alive until near the end of the book, the climax, when Crane's wife arrives unexpectedly in Laos, and when he is killed by the Viet-Minh. This part of the book is vividly written and extremely moving. It is a pity that the build-up to it, despite the many picturesque descriptions of local scenery and custom, is so unexciting, so discursive. Mr. Lewis is a writer of description and incident rather than of character or of theme. His undoubted gifts may be important if only he can use them more clear-sightedly.

PATRICK LEIGH FERMOR'S *The Violins of Saint-Jacques*,* on the other hand, succeeds in doing precisely what it sets out to do—to describe in detail the erupting of a volcano on the island of Saint-Jacques, in the Caribbean archipelago, during the great Mardi Gras celebrations in 1902, and the complete disappearance of the island into the sea. This is a subject perfectly suited to Mr. Leigh Fermor's talents. He has an appetite for the bizarre, whether in person or place; Saint-Jacques, with its French aristocracy, its negro servants, its heat, its snakes and parrots, could hardly be improved on as a subject for him. Mr. Leigh Fermor writes as vividly about sounds, scents, and places as he does about people. In a sense, indeed, people are the mere decoration to his beautiful landscapes and interiors. His caressing love of objects, natural or artificial, reminds one a little of the writings of Denton Welch,

* *The Violins of Saint-Jacques*. By PATRICK LEIGH FERMOR. Murray, Verschoyle. 9s. 6d.

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though Mr. Leigh Fermor has far more vitality.

This short novel is beautifully constructed. Sometimes the story is related at first-hand by Berthe, who was a witness to the eruption; at other times Mr. Leigh Fermor moves easily into the third person. It is to the writer's great credit that he never for a moment permits himself to be waylaid by the picturesque but moves relentlessly to his climax.

Of all the novelists under review, only Mr. Charteris comes anywhere near Mr. Leigh Fermor in sheer exuberance of visual imagination; Mr. Leigh Fermor has a marvellous feeling for the effects of light and shade.

> The sparks of the flint lit up her face, summoning those hollows and salients for a split second out of the neutral moonlight and the shadows of the olive trees. The moon, having cast loose long ago from the trees in front of us, was now travelling across the zenith of the sky. On the hair-thin and just descriable line of the horizon beyond the silently spinning trunks, the Aegean hung in a shining and unruffled curtain.

The Violins of Saint-Jacques revels in its own theme: it celebrates the mingling of festivity and calamity. It is also a study in nostalgia. Although it is in itself a completely satisfying work of art, it does leave one hoping that Mr. Leigh Fermor will, in his next book, find a perhaps deeper, more important theme for his rare and remarkable gifts.

CHRISTOPHER SYKES' *A Song of a Shirt** is not only satisfying in itself, it also causes reverberations in the mind of its reader. On the surface, it is a scathing, unsparing satire on Army Headquarters convention in Cairo, during and after the war. But it is much more than that. Unlike the usual tradition of English satire or moral tale, this book works out its purpose through real, absolutely convincing characters.

The plot is a simple one; Harry Leighton, coming to Cairo from Singapore with a letter which he has been charged to give personally to General Gittle, is shipwrecked on the way and, having a romantic taste for looking the part, arrives in the presence of General Crust and General Gittle wearing a rent and vilely smelling shirt. They, angry at such defiance of convention, refuse to take the letter personally. So Harry, overwrought and incensed, "threw down the envelope on Gittle's desk, saying at the same time: 'You bloody bastard'; and . . . turned on General Crust and spat in his face."

This episode sets in motion every kind of petty Army resentment. Mr. Sykes writes in a terse, bare style that is deceptively simple. One only realises how subtle it is when one considers the implications it manages to convey. The story is told in the first person by a friend of Harry's who is continually trying to save him both from the Army's revenge on his behaviour and from his own idealism. Harry is superbly created both as an individual and as a type of the victim. His obsession with Kafka gives his own plight and the entire novel an added depth.

> I have so far thought of myself as innocent and Fishguard and Crust and Poett as guilty, but of course, Kafka would insist on including their view, and seeing it passionately and furiously, feeling it to the temporary exclusion of all else.

Mr. Sykes is merciless in his exposure of the tyranny of convention, but it is not only convention that he is satirising in *A Song of a Shirt*. He is exploring power and the sense of power. He is not a pamphleteer or a ranting moralist; he refuses to twist his story to make a moral point. Indeed, of power he says:

> There will always be Crusts, and they will always have the victory. The reason is simply that, unlike their opponents, they represent deep things in human nature. The mysterious power wielded by the Crust connection (using the term in a universal sense) is not to be defined or analysed. It is too mad and unconscious and hidden for that, and for the same reason, it would seem, this power eludes destruction.

A Song of a Shirt, then, is written on a universal theme which the writer has explored with penetration and honesty. It is a novel, short though it is, that combines deeply considered ideas with an easy, graceful style.

MR. HUGO CHARTERIS, in *A Share of the World*,* has, like Mr. Sykes, a strong feeling for style and language, though he has a very much more complex style. In this matter, he has perhaps more in common with Mr. Leigh Fermor.

**A Song of a Shirt*. By CHRISTOPHER SYKES. Verschoyle. 10s. 6d.

**A Share of the World*. By HUGO CHARTERIS. Collins. 12s. 6d.

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A Share of the World is the story of a young man, John Grant, who, fighting in Italy during the war and enduring (there is no other word for it) a strange love-affair in England in peace-time, is trying to get out of "the web of himself." In this sense, Mr. Charteris' novel is rather an existentialist one. He writes:

> Indeed, there in the smell of stale smoke, frost, and carriage dust he decided that the qualities with which we are born, or into which we are conditioned, are unimportant, being beyond our responsibility—they are the "web" of each self. But afterwards it is possible for the true individual to break free from his web, having understood it, then—shape himself and his life. In this was the only meaning of "freedom" still valid.

But there is no overt philosophy to be found in *A Share of the World*. Mr. Charteris is chiefly concerned with a character who is in a continual state of being tested. He is most convincing when this test is an objective one—the white house in Italy, for example, which Grant on patrol never entered and so never discovered whether it contained Germans or not. After the war, Grant is haunted by the fact that, mistaking him for a German, he killed a British corporal, because he wished to tell "a more polished lie" when he returned to Headquarters.

Grant is a man who feels he has to redeem himself, who has to find forgiveness for the acts he has not yet committed. After the war he seeks out a girl, Jane, who seems unattainable, because he feels that by attaining the apparently unattainable he will finally be free from the "web of himself." There is a good deal of masochism in all this. Mr. Charteris, in his portrayal of Grant's love-affair with Jane, does not quite manage to make clear either the true nature of Jane's character, or the motivation of Grant's actions. He seems to lose himself in his own subtlety.

Yet *A Share of the World* is one of the very few good first novels to be written by a young writer since the war. Mr. Charteris has a versatile style, and he has the gift of being able to convey and clarify states of mind as easily as he can describe places or objects. In *A Share of the World* he handles a profound theme and only just misses controlling it absolutely. He has a strong sense of character, but does not quite succeed in convincing us of the symbolic significance of Bright, the character who both represents Grant's sense of ordeal and is also a

THE AGE OF SUSPICION

JAMES WECHSLER was called before the Un-American Activities Committee last year. His encounter with Senator McCarthy gave rise to this book. He describes how his active liberalism developed from an early flirtation with communism, and gives an excellent analysis of McCarthyism in action as he experienced it. *Just out.* 16/-

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MORDECAI RICHLER is a young Canadian. His first novel has a Spanish setting and describes the predicament of a painter as he becomes increasingly aware of the claims of society so insistently stated by the conditions of Spanish life. *May.* 10/6

THE HONEYED PEACE

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THE KEY THAT RUSTS

ISOBEL ENGLISH combines an indulgent attitude towards her characters with a sternly ironical view of human behaviour. Her first novel, a love story, seems to have the intimacy of gossip, but its implications are profoundly disturbing. *June.* 10/6

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frequent reminder of his guilt. In an otherwise realistic though introspective novel, Bright does not fit in. His sudden appearances stretch our credulity too far. Nevertheless, one feels more pleasure and excitement in *A Share of the World* than disappointment. Mr. Charteris' next book seems likely to be of real importance.

ALFRED HAYES' *In Love** is a very different matter. Though this novelist writes clearly and vigorously, he has chosen a very commonplace subject—sexual jealousy. His short novel deals with the feelings of a man who watches the girl with whom he thinks he is in love leave him for someone else. Mr. Hayes says nothing new about this situation. And the point of his story seems curiously to diminish as he writes. In the first place, he has no subtlety in his conception of love, and secondly, his story is unrelated to a wider context where other things than love-making go on. Paradoxically, Mr. Hayes would have written a more intense sexual drama if he had been less intense in his treatment of it, if he had included other things as contrast.

The best of these books make one feel that the novel today is feeling for a new, a freer form. It is not, perhaps, the sort of experiment which Mr. Philip Toynbee made in *The Garden to the Sea* that is needed; for, in that book, one felt that the plot and characters were contrived to fill a new form. The great experimental works of art, such as *Ulysses*, bring such pressure to bear that they force into life a new design and a new language. Mr. Charteris' manner, in *A Share of the World*, gives some hope for the future of the novel. He, and Mr. Sykes also, have an awareness of the inner and the outer worlds which, in the finest novels of any time, are the same thing.

Elizabeth Jennings

* *In Love*. By ALFRED HAYES. Gollancz. 12s. 6d.

THE MEANING OF 1789

OF the making of books about the French Revolution there is, of course, no end, and probably will be no end unless or until the whole world is frozen stiff physically in thick-ribbed ice or intellectually in the icy rigidity of œcumenical dictatorship. Even in the last few months two books with the same title, *The French Revolution*,* have been published in English and they show why the strange, bloody, political antics of a few thousand Parisians a century and a half ago must fascinate human beings as long as historians or political thinkers are allowed to speculate upon the meaning of history. For it is the "meaning" of the Revolution in which we are interested. The labours of "scientific" historians have been so immense and so minute that the facts necessary for understanding and interpreting—if it is ever possible to understand and interpret history—are not in dispute. Professor Goodwin's excellent little handbook proves this. His object is "to make available to the general public the changing interpretations of the French Revolution of 1789 which have resulted from the researches of French and other historical scholars during the past generation." But if you compare the facts as given by Mr. Goodwin with those given in Salvemini's book, which was first published in 1907, nearly half a century ago, you will find that they have not in the main or in the most important respects been altered by the researches. Of course, new facts have been brought to light, but not the kind which would lead to great changes in interpretation. For instance, in dealing with the events of the winter of 1793 and the spring of 1794, Mr. Goodwin points out that "until recently historians attributed to Robespierre the political tactics which had, in fact, been employed by Danton." The truth about the relations of Robespierre to Danton in the months preceding the destruction of the Dantonists is naturally of considerable interest, though it is not very "recent," for it

* *The French Revolution, 1788–1792*. By GAETANO SALVEMINI. Jonathan Cape. 18s.; and *The French Revolution*. By A. GOODWIN. Hutchinson's Universal Library. 8s. 6d.

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was known twenty years ago when Mr. Thompson wrote his biography of Robespierre. But in any case, it could not possibly affect a general interpretation of the Revolution.

When one considers what exactly Mr. Goodwin and others mean by the interpretation of the Revolution, one soon discovers that the word covers a multitude of heterogeneous questions, "puzzling questions," though perhaps "not beyond all conjecture." They are posed explicitly more often by Salvemini than by Mr. Goodwin. One, which no historian can dodge altogether, even though he aims only at a narrative of events, is "What caused the Revolution?" Both our authors deal with it in preliminary chapters on the *ancien régime* and the social conditions in pre-revolutionary France. Here at once one sees that the interpretation changes according to the direction in which the historian is looking rather than because new facts have been revealed. And the causes of complex historical events are so many that innumerable different interpretations may all be equally true. Mr. Goodwin begins his first chapter with the statement that "the immediate causes of the French Revolution of 1789 must be sought not in the economic grievances of the peasants, not in the political discontents of the middle class, but in the reactionary aspirations of the French aristocracy." But Salvemini, in his second chapter, writes that "a great revolution, in fact, is already mature in men's minds when it reveals itself in deeds; it is not simply an outbreak of unreasoning violence, but the result, above all, of intense thought and of an entirely new moral attitude." And in the epilogue, which is the last chapter in his book, he insists that the view that the revolutionaries destroyed in a few months an ancient society built up over many centuries is mistaken; on the contrary they completed in a few months the dissolution of a society which had been going on for centuries. The work of radical destruction, which was accomplished not, as is commonly thought, by the two Assemblies but by the mob, had in fact "to a great extent already been achieved by the pre-revolutionary *philosophes*."

The picture of cause and effect in a great historical event given by these sentences is strangely different from that drawn for us by most modern historians, sociologists, and political scientists. Their philosophy of history involves a denial that ideas are of importance in the determination of individual or communal actions or of events. What happens—whether it be a marriage or a revolution, the writing of a book or a war—is the result of a blind impulse in an individual or a crowd; the impulse itself, like everything else, is determined by a remote mechanism which may be an old-fashioned deity or an ideology, which is a new-fashioned kind of God, or by the oldest of all gods called chance or fate. But if Salvemini's interpretation is correct, the French Revolution was the final stage in the creation of a new society, with new "juridical principles," new political institutions, new social standards and beliefs. Those who took part in the destruction of the old feudal society and in the building of the new, the kings and their officials and the men of the *tiers état*, "were always prompted by their immediate personal interests, and never tried to put forward a comprehensive plan for rooting out feudalism." So too the final stages of the Revolution, the building of the economic and legal framework of the new society, were

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not the work of the revolutionary legislators and administrators, Sieyès or Mirabeau or Condorcet or Danton or Robespierre, but of the mob and its violence, the fact that events followed so closely the ideas of the *philosophes* and their political disciples being due "to a spontaneous concordance between events and theories." And yet, as we have seen, Salvemini maintains that the Revolution was "not simply an outbreak of unreasoning violence, but the result, above all, of intense thought and of an entirely new moral attitude."

And Mr. Goodwin, who not unnaturally is more concerned with what happened than why it happened, in fact reveals or assumes the same complication of cause and effect as does Salvemini. For instance, when he says that the immediate cause of the Revolution was the reactionary aspirations of the privileged, which provoked action in the unprivileged he is saying in other words what Salvemini meant when he wrote that the *tiers état* were always prompted by their immediate personal interests, not by ideas or a programme of reform. And yet he also agrees with Salvemini that the Revolution was not an unreasoning outbreak, a blind conflict of interests, but the result of intense thought and a conflict of ideas. For in describing the "outburst of pamphlet literature in the winter of 1788," he points out that three concepts emerged from this literature which influenced profoundly "the course and character of future events" and represented "the response of the third estate to the political challenge of the privileged orders." These three ideas were a declaration of rights, which entailed the demand for equality and liberty; the conception of national sovereignty which challenged the traditional hierarchical organisation of society; and the demand for a constitution.

It is fashionable at the moment among many different sects of writers to pretend that there is no such thing as truth in the interpretation of history. Each new generation or age, according to this theory, constructs its own account of past events, and the one is as true or false as the other. The theory is absurd. Of course each generation is inclined to be more interested in some aspects of great historical movements than in others, and this sometimes leads to one seeing a facet of truth invisible to the others. But what is seen is either true or false, and in the process of time there is a real sifting of the true from the false in the vision of past events. This is shown by two such books as those now under review. The authors belong to different generations, traditions, and nationalities. Each has something to contribute peculiar to himself and his social and intellectual environment, and each sees something which the other misses. Each has a bias, but the bias is discernible to and can be discounted by any experienced reader. And, at the same time, because they are not writing to prove a theory or to toe a party or ideological line, there is a fundamental and important agreement in their "interpretation." There is, indeed, historical truth discoverable by historians, and luckily it is so complicated that the search for it will legitimately furnish occupation for many more generations of historians like Salvemini and Mr. Goodwin.

Leonard Woolf

THE DAYDREAMING ABOLITIONIST

MR. CHARLES DUFF has had the reputation for many years of being a really Swiftian satirist. His Hangman's Handbook* has been reissued and enlarged several times and now we have "the definitive edition." The British taste in satirists is not for writers whose "fine wit Makes such a wound, the knife is lost in it" but for something that fizzes and sparkles without burning. Hence the success of Mr. Duff, who cannot hide his glee at inventing the brilliant stunt of pretending to be in favour of hanging when he is really against it. He is always nudging the reader to warn him that there is a good bit coming. He crams in notes, anecdotes, and straightforward abolitionist arguments without taking any trouble to reconcile them with the primary inversion on which the satire depends. Much of his detail is odd and entertaining but the general effect is a

* *A New Handbook on Hanging*. By CHARLES DUFF. Andrew Melrose. 10s. 6d.

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soft British muddle, like a film that has been confused and destroyed at the script conferences before it ever reaches the studio floor.

The muddle is due to ambiguity of aim. Mr. Duff is revolted by the indecency of hanging. His mind is stuffed with horrifying details of executions that went wrong. He has haunted the company of retired executioners and clipped assiduously from the *News of the World*; but like many of us he is fascinated by the ritual of the death call. His attitude to capital punishment resembles the attitude of the clerical pornographer to vice. This makes his aim wobble, and satire needs to be disciplined: once it gets fuzzy and wavering, once it allows its narrow concentration on the hate-object to be distracted by incidental delights and self-congratulation, it disintegrates.

The abolitionists play into the hands of the retentionists by being even more emotional, and their emotion comes from sympathy with the murderer while the retentionists do at least sympathise with his victim. The victims of murder, the old women, the raped children, the prostitutes, are often dismissed from the argument as cursorily as the traditional widows and orphans from the old debates on the nationalisation of railways. Mr. Duff shows overt sympathy with the hanged, half-concealed sympathy with the hangman, and none with the victim, perhaps because murder lacks the titillating ritual of judicial hanging. In one of his "straight" bits, he quotes statistics showing that in countries where capital punishment has been abolished there are fewer murders. Opponents of capital punishment who really disliked murder would make this the mainstay of their case. It seems to me far more convincing than all Mr. Duff's ghoulish jokes about elongated necks and miscalculated drops. One strong argument for abolition is that it will remove unhealthy temptations from the daydreaming abolitionist.

Meanwhile, here is the ideal present for anybody living a vivid fantasy life as a Public Hangman. Curious and amusing as it is in parts, it is not satire. Satire does not feed fantasies; it burns them away.

R. G. G. Price

THE DESPOTIC EGO

THE correspondence of Proust* is something unique; it is not, as is the case with Mme de Sévigné, a means of imparting information and advice, or, as is the case with Flaubert, a means of relaxing from encounters with the muse and of talking in an unguarded way about art and all sorts of human problems to numerous friends: it is above all a prolongation of the ego of the most self-centred writer we know, including Rilke, and a means of enforcing the biddings of his autocratic will——for how can one refuse anything to a sick man? Flaubert, Proust, and Rilke show a similar single-mindedness about their work and a similar attitude to life as being merely incidental to art. But Flaubert had a kind of humanity and at times a full-bloodedness which we do not find in either Rilke or Proust, who maintain throughout their relations with other people an oriental politeness and a set smile which nothing can dispel or penetrate. They talk endlessly about their ailments and sorrows, but nothing interrupts the steady flow of pledges of admiration and affection which at times set the reader wondering if the recipients of these endearing terms were truly in possession of the numerous gifts they were credited with. Perhaps they were; yet the excess of epithets, the repeated assertions raise now and again unwonted doubts.

With Proust the problem is complicated by the fact that his frequent professions about love and friendships belie a good deal of the content of his letters and his behaviour. On the one hand we find him saying time and again that the loved one is merely a creation of our mind, that love is a mental state and nothing more, that the only paradise is paradise lost,

* *Letters of Marcel Proust to Antoine Bibesco.* Translated by GERARD HOPKINS. Thames and Hudson Ltd. 42s.

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and that only through anxiety, regret, and death do we know something about feelings; friendship, says Proust, is a mask, something which he wears without believing in it, and feelings are mere projections of our ego or, as Sartre would say, a means of acquiring power over others. Yet his letters are crammed with protestations of love and flatteries which remind us of Cleopatra's feline ways; some of them are masterpieces of coquetry, yet coquetry is just like spicing to food, it must not become the whole dish. The question therefore arises as to whether all this was not mere sycophancy and a means to achieve his ends, or whether there was some genuineness in what he said.

It is a question that cannot be answered in a clear-cut way. He was undeniably capable of genuine sympathy and friendly gestures, but above all, from the seclusion of his cork-lined room, he was wielding absolute power in order to satisfy the inner necessity of his genius, which was to devote his whole being to his creative work. He was ruthless at the instinctive level, at the level at which a whole organism is consciously and subconsciously intent upon one single function and must by all means carry it out; so he cultivated his asthma as Baudelaire cultivated his hysteria and Rimbaud his derangement of the senses. Whether he believed in Groddeck's theories or not, his asthma was a necessity to the workings of his genius; it offered him the means to be more despotic than any king. He felt the need to be loved, to have friends, for he knew how much we live by the light and the glow of others; but he wanted his friends as objects necessary to his ego and nothing more; and with his necessary sleep, his fumigations, his unpredictable bouts of illness, he could dangle them from his little finger, keep them waiting, ever wondering whether they would see him or not. What a wonderful tyranny!

With Proust, as Mr. Hopkins, who knows his subject, points out in a brilliant and incisive preface, nothing was simple, and his friends must have more than once been bewildered by the pressure of his exacting affection; yet all of them, and the rest of men too, are well aware that genius exacts a heavy toll from all connected with it, but repays in creations which defy time and transmute all into joy. To translate Proust into English is at all times a difficult task, when one deals with his finished

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works; the letters, which were above all substitutes for conversations, records of afterthoughts written at great speed and in very unrehearsed states of mind, present difficulties which few could face. Mr. Hopkins emerges once more unscathed and adds to his unsurpassed reputation as an interpreter of French literature. The order of the letters, as he himself mentions repeatedly, is not quite chronological and presents obvious inaccuracies; yet, as he is not the editor of Proust but merely translating some of his correspondence, he could not but confine himself to his task. The letters are full of interest and are illuminating about Proust's character and his art. They are presented to the public in a form which is a credit to English book production, and therefore combine visual beauty with intellectual pleasure.

Joseph Chiari

A WORLD BROUGHT TO LIFE

THIS wonderfully rich book* has for its central theme, Dance in Southern India, but resembles not a little those Indian legends, "whose original framework," the author writes, "is overgrown by a didactic and speculative jungle, like those great temples of Angkor whose sculptured colonnades and terraces have lain for centuries beneath their crown of jungle foliage and emerge now inseparably linked with a rival architecture of forest trees scarcely less glorious than their own." The "jungle foliage," the speculative, descriptive, and story-telling gifts of the author, make powerful claims on one's interest.

The book is full of legends, fantastic, magical, and often provocatively humorous, for legends are the material of Indian dance. The Birth of a Bhuta, for example, the long story almost at the close of the book, is not quickly forgotten, not only for its weirdness but for the clear picture it paints of the superstitious yet practical mind of the Indian peasant.

But it is eminently through music and dance that the Indian gods reveal themselves, and to express them worthily the dancer has recourse to the accumulated techniques of many centuries. Miss de Zoete describes in detail two great dance-forms, Kathakali and Bharata Natya. In Kathakali nothing that contributes to the dramatic expression of the spirit is overlooked: elaborate maquillage—no masks are worn, but what a work of art each ephemeral make-up becomes!—complex music of flute, voice, and drums, an exactly considered *mise-èn-scène* (even the curtain plays a vital role) precede and accompany the rigorous performance of the dancers, whose rules make those "of classical ballet seem very rudimentary." Miss de Zoete discusses Abhinaya, the art of gesture, of emotional expression, with learning and almost Proustian similes ("Only a prepared mind can understand a given language; a fact on which thieves clearly rely in their wonderful vocabulary of rhyming slang"), and sums up its essence in the epitaph of the "sad and eloquent clown, Deburau, who wrote: '*Ci gît qui a tout dit et qui n'a pas parlé*'."

THOUGH strangely different from our own, these legends are "as closely woven into the consciousness of the Indianised cultures of South-East Asia as the Bible stories" into ours. The popular goddess, Sarasvati, is a truly bewildering deity. She was a dancer, and also the goddess of learning; she had complete mastery of hearing and of utterance—in other words, of spells ("In the beginning was the Word"); "She is a wild and fearful being of the high hills, deep river valleys and impenetrable jungle. Preceded by peacock-feather fans, she sweeps from peak to peak, trailing her green, wild-silkworm dress, attended by a savage cortège of tigers, lions and wolves. . . ."

In Kathakali there are twenty-four basic *mudras*—pictorial hand-gestures—which, "like every manifestation of life in India, have a supernatural parentage and significance. . . ." And, in this connection, very interesting is the author's reference to Mr. Joseph's *Elizabethan Acting*, a study of hand-gestures in the theatre, pulpit, and lawcourt in Shakespeare's time, a

* *The Other Mind.* By BERYL DE ZOETE. Gollancz. 52s. 6d.

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work itself indebted to the *Chirologia* and *Chironomia* by Bulwer, published in 1644, which reveal the identity of problems between the Elizabethan and Indian theorists of the theatre. But besides "the life of the hands" there are innumerable rules for the movements of the cheeks, lips, and chin. There are also said to be sixteen types of heroine!

The home of Kathakali is the region of Kerala, which lies between the Indian Ocean and the western boundary of Madras Presidency, where "still survive . . . the grandest traditions of Indian art as well as some of the most primitive and barbarous superstitions." The actors are principally drawn from the Nayar caste, who were once the fighting men of Malabar, and whose training today is almost exactly that of the warriors.

Bharata Natya, on the other hand, was until recently "a temple dance performed by the *devadasis*, literally 'God's slaves,' virgins dedicated to the temple and offering themselves body and soul to those who officiated in the temple." It is now the most famous solo dance for women. "Music conditions the whole structure of the dance," which is divided into "a number of parts which in a musical suite we should call 'movements'." "On the creeper of dance-sequences which bend and twine, the gesturing hands sprout like foliage, and expressive glances blossom like flowers," says an anonymous Indian poet.

I might add here that all the photographs chosen are valuable contributions to the text; but it is a great pity too that this book has neither an index nor a glossary of Indian terms.

But dancing, as I have suggested, is not the whole of this remarkable work. For those wholly allergic to dancing this book offers yet another exhilaration. It is an album of exquisite literary watercolours.

". . . I well remember the first time we came suddenly on a magnificent, riderless clay horse at a crossroads, pawing the blue air above a burly, moustachioed, painted figure, with grooms and women at his side . . . and further along the same road we saw in a grove a crowd of people and a flourish of scarlet cloth which seemed the robes of some high figures seated on horses. A priest was ringing a bell. We went down into the grove and saw that a substantial meal was being placed before three images garlanded and dressed in red robes. They were huge, like giants, with *raksasa* faces . . . and glaring eyes. . . ."

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"Just as they were ending, the gathering clouds broke and it rained in torrents for at least an hour, at the very moment that the Malayas were dressing in the temple for the service. The sea boomed, darkness fell; the lightning spread in sheets over the pale jade sea. . . ."

"The moon fell languidly down the sky. The last thing I remember of that night was a huge elephant swaying dreamily under the tree to which he was tethered, his feet glistening with moonlight. . . ."

It is a most unusual world Miss de Zoete has brought to life with her words, and lovelier probably than the world she saw, which is the reason why a poet is so precious.

Villiers David

WHEN THERE'S NO ONE ABOUT IN THE QUAD

UNPHILOSOPHICAL persons like myself, when they want to remember what Berkeley is all about, have to fall back on the famous limerick which explains that the sycamore tree continues to be, when no one is there to perceive it, only because "observed by, yours faithfully, God." Modern commentators, especially Dr. A. A. Luce, have shown that this is a travesty of what Berkeley really said. And this is just as well, for "it does not constitute an explanation to assert that there exists an entity, not clearly specified, which operates by an unknown method to produce what we set out to explain"; and if on these grounds we take away the second verse of the limerick, we are left in the first verse with a position that may be logically unassailable, but which is too far from common sense to be taken seriously. What Berkeley really said was something quite different and, as he always maintained, thoroughly commonsensical. The question arises, however, why trained readers for two hundred years have misinterpreted Berkeley. In the case of any other philosopher almost, one could say that he was misread because he expressed himself badly; but by common consent Berkeley is among the most lucid and elegant of all philosophers. One can say, of course, that all his readers for two hundred years were invincibly stupid, but that is hardly good enough. The puzzle remains; and Mr. J. O. Wisdom* has set out to solve it.

Related to this is the question whether Berkeley had two philosophies, one early, one late. The philosophy misread from *The Principles of Human Knowledge* and the other early works, the system summarised in the limerick, is such a queer one that it was natural to wonder if Berkeley never deviated from it. And it seemed to many commentators that in his last work, *Siris*, he did; that in fact *Siris* represents a wholly new departure, into a sort of Platonism. This view, too, has now been exploded, and it has been shown that *Siris* is thoroughly consistent with the *Principles*. But here again, the same sort of problem crops up: why did so many people find a new departure when there is none to find? And here at least it is agreed that there is such a new emphasis, such a wholly different tone and approach in *Siris* that there is plenty of excuse for misreading it. What is the significance of these changes? This question too Mr. Wisdom has tried to answer.

Whose business is it to ask these questions and try to answer them? Hardly the philosopher's; his job, presumably, is to ascertain the authentic doctrines and expound them. The biographer's, then? But here we come upon another mystery. For Berkeley's elusiveness is almost Shakesperean. There is plenty of material, of letters and first-hand impressions by other people; there are, above all, the private working notebooks, once called "The Commonplace Book," now "Philosophical Commentaries"; and yet for all that he is so well-documented, the lineaments of a distinctive personality never show through. It was this that baffled and intrigued Yeats, so that he declared Berkeley "wore a mask." Mr. Wisdom, by going to the psychoanalyst for the answers, is able to use this very evasiveness, for instance Berkeley's enigmatic silence about his parents, as evidence. But it is surely questionable whether evidence that is too sparse for the biographer will suffice for the psychoanalyst.

MY own feeling is that in trying to jump from philosophy to psychoanalysis, Mr. Wisdom has missed one very important stepping-stone. For Berkeley was a writer in

* *The Unconscious Origin of Berkeley's Philosophy.* J. O. WISDOM. The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis. 25s.

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the full sense of an artist with words; and ever since Freud it has been recognised that the psyche often betrays itself in unconscious punning play and recurrent verbal images. Thus Mr. Wisdom's case, which rests upon a hypothesis about the infant Berkeley's attitude to fæces, together with his known hypochondria and the intestinal maladies (psychosomatic, in Mr. Wisdom's view) from which he suffered, is for me most convincing when it leans upon such a phrase as the one from *Siris* about trees being "choked and stuffed with their own juice." And it is least convincing when, in respect of the *Principles*, it is made to lean upon an image, of Matter as the "cement" of the external world, which isn't Berkeley's at all but only Mr. Wisdom's. (On the contrary, in the *Principles*, even at their most solipsist, Berkeley's style insists all the time on the *tenuity* of the concept of Matter, its merely phantasmal life as an unnecessary abstraction in the mind of Locke.)

Jean Paulhan has said that people take up one of two attitudes to the words they use. They are either "terrorists," suspicious and wary lest words trap them into saying what they don't mean, or else "rhetoricians," giving words their head, following where they lead in the faith that, the word once uttered, meaning will accrue to it. Berkeley wrote all his earlier works as a "terrorist"—he grumbles quite explicitly, at the beginning of the *Principles*, about the unreliability of the language he has to use. *Siris* is so different in effect because it is written out of the other attitude, by a "rhetorician," letting the puns and submerged metaphors lead him by their own logic. In Berkeley's period the language was particularly apt for this sort of thing. William Empson has pointed out how, in *A Tale of a Tub*, Swift makes play with the etymological puns in "Spirit," its derivation from "wind" or "breath," its chemical sense, its special meaning of alcohol, so that dissenters who claim to be possessed of the spirit can be made to seem to say that they are drunk or they are windbags or they are farting. Precisely the same pun is central to *Siris*, but used there in all seriousness, and to work the other way, so that the beneficial chemical spirit to be found in tar-water (Berkeley's starting-point), comes ultimately to mean the breath of God. To be sure, this does not explain why Berkeley changed his stylistic tactics, but it certainly makes the

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change less surprising, once we realise that the language was ready, in Empson's phrase, to "play into his hands." And Berkeley, when he proceeded in this way, knew what he was doing; for he was always alive to this sort of thing—his argument against Locke's "substance" in the *Principles* is, from one point of view, only the realisation that in Locke's use of the word there is an unacknowledged pun on "standing under." On this showing, *Siris* is not, as Mr. Wisdom thinks, disordered; it is so only if it is regarded as a philosophical treatise, which in plan and intention it quite plainly isn't.

I suspect that Mr. Wisdom's own argument sometimes depends on unacknowledged puns. Thus the link between the mathematical fluxions that Berkeley attacked, and the "bloody flux" from which he suffered seems a sort of pun; and I suspect that the argument, Matter=Poison=Fæces, rests on a pun with the "matter" of a septic wound. But much of this book, especially in the first more orthodox half, is very subtle and striking. It doesn't convince me that philosophy can be married to psychoanalysis; but it was worth while trying to make the match.

Donald Davie

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